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ESSAYS ON LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

ALL the papers included in these volumes have already been published, with the exception of the lecture upon Carlyle. The essays on Dante, Goethe, and Rousseau appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, the essay on Wordsworth in *Fraser's Magazine*, and the articles on Cartesianism and Metaphysic in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. I have to offer my best thanks to the Editor of the *Contemporary Review*, to Messrs. Longmans, Green, & Co., and to Messrs. A. & C. Black, for their kindness in allowing this reprint.

I should perhaps mention that the article on Cartesianism was published in 1876, and the article on Metaphysic in 1883. Subsequent to these dates there has been in this country much

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discussion as to the Philosophy of Spinoza, and also as to the general relations between Metaphysic, Logic, and Psychology, to which, of course, no reference will be found in these articles.

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DANTE IN HIS RELATION TO THE THEOLOGY AND ETHICS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

THE opinions of Dante, like those of every great writer who has treated of ethical, political, or religious subjects, have been made the battle-ground of bitter controversy. Apart from those who fall into the shallow trap of seeking the greatness of the poet in some secret doctrine which can be read by the aid of a verbal key, there are many who have sought for Protestantism, and some who have sought for Socialism, or even Nihilism, in his pages.[1] Their interpretations, as was to be expected, have called out those of an opposite school, who have turned him into a champion of orthodoxy, and have treated his denunciation of the Papal policy as a separable accident of his poetry.

[1] E. Aroux : *Dante Hérétique, Révolutionaire, et Socialiste.*

Now in a sense it may be maintained, that both parties are "right in what they affirm and wrong in what they deny." Those who see in Dante's words the germs of religious and political change are not altogether in error, though they sometimes look for the evidence of their view in the wrong place. For the writers who are most revolutionary in their ultimate effect are not those who violently break away from the institutions of the past and set up a new principle against them, but rather those who so thoroughly enter into the spirit of those institutions that they make them, so to speak, transparent. When the soul becomes visible, the body is ready to drop away. We often find systems of doctrine surviving the most violent attack from without, and apparently only deriving new vigour from the contest. But one thing there is which they cannot survive—viz., being thoroughly understood and appreciated; for the intelligence that has fully appreciated them has *ipso facto* grown out of them and beyond them. It has extracted the principle from its former embodiment, and so made it capable of entering into combination with other principles to produce new forms of life and thought.

It is in this relation that Dante stands to mediæval Catholicism. In attempting to revivify its ideas, he "betrayed its secret." As Plato in his *Republic* developed the ruling ideas of Greek politics to a point at which they necessarily break through the form of the Greek state and destroy it, so Dante, in giving a final and conclusive utterance to mediæval ideas, at once revealed the vital source of their power, and showed where they come into contradiction with themselves and point beyond themselves for their completion. The attempts made to prove that Dante was a "Reformer before the Reformation," or a "Revolutionary before the Revolution" are, in the sense in which they were made, vain and futile: and, in spite of the rough way in which he denounces the state of things ecclesiastical and political, writers like Ozanam and Hettinger have no difficulty in showing Dante's complete orthodoxy, and his complete acceptance of the Catholic system of life and thought. Even from the first the Catholic Church recognised that the attacks of Dante were the wounds of a friend, and that it would be an absurdity to put in the *Index* a poem which was the most eloquent of all expressions of its own essential ideas. The revolutionary power

of Dante's poetry lay in quite a different direction. It lay just in this, that Dante held up to mediæval Catholicism its own ideal, the very principle on which it rested and from which it drew all its power, that he judged it by that ideal, and that by that ideal he found it wanting. For, although, as "the most hopeful son of the Church Militant," Dante seemed to himself to be able to indicate one simple way in which the old order of Church and State could be restored, to all but himself the very expression of the conditions necessary for this return to the past was the demonstration of its impossibility.

In this essay, it is not proposed to consider Dante as a poet, or at least to enter into any questions directly connected with the poetic form in which he has expressed himself, but rather to treat him as a writer who sought in his own way to read the signs of his times, and to declare to others the lesson he had thus learnt.

In doing so, we are judging Dante according to a standard which he himself has set up. The poetic form, indeed, is inseparable from Dante's thought, as is shown by his comparative failure to utter himself in prose; but to himself it was, so to speak, an

inseparable accident, necessary only as the vehicle of his message to his time, as the form through which alone he could express his whole conception of human life, and "justify the ways of God to man." If ever there has been a poetry which was indifferent to its own matter, it was certainly not the "sacred poem to which heaven and earth had set their hands so that for many years it had made the poet lean." The *Divina Commedia* was for Dante simply the last perfect expression of the same thought, which in all his other works, both of prose and verse, it had been his effort to utter. It is not, indeed, a didactic poem in the ordinary sense of the word. Dante was too perfect an artist not to see that the direct practical movement of the preacher or the orator is alien to the contemplative spirit of poetry. But it is didactic in the sense that it is an effort to exhibit the ideal truth of things, the moral law of the world, which is hidden from us by the confusion of phenomena, and the illusion of our own passions. Hence the first problem suggested by the *Commedia* is, how Dante's poetry becomes the vehicle of a complete philosophical and theological view of human life without ceasing to be poetry.

We may answer, in the first place, that the reason why Dante is able to be philosophical without ceasing to be poetical, is the same which enables Plato to approach so closely to poetry without ceasing to be a philosopher. By Dante, as by Plato, every part is seen in the light of the whole, and therefore becomes a kind of individual whole in itself. Dante can be faithful to truth without ceasing to be a poet, because for him the highest truth is poetical. His unceasing effort to reach the poetry of truth and the truth of poetry may be evidenced in many ways.

He began his career as a poet by a kind of Wordsworthian reaction against the affectations of the Provençal school, from which he received his first lessons in the art of verse. In a well-known passage in the *Purgatorio*, Bonagiunta di Lucca, one of his poetical predecessors, questions him as to the reason of the superiority of his lyrics. Dante answers that his secret was simply strict adherence to the truth of feeling. "I am one, who, when love inspires me, make careful note of what he says, and in the very manner in which *he* speaks within, I set myself to utter it." Bonagiunta is made to answer: "Now, I see the obstacle which

made me and the Notary and Guittone fall short of the sweet new style, which in your verses sounds in my ears. I see clearly that your wings follow closely after the dictation of love, which was certainly not the case with us."

In the description of outward things, Dante's minute accuracy, as of one who wrote always "with his eye on the object," is one of his most obvious characteristics. Sometimes he goes so far in breaking through the conventional limitations of poetical language as to give us a shock of surprise, like that which we receive from the homely detail of Wordsworth; though in Dante we never meet with those pieces of crude undigested prose to which Wordsworth sinks in his less inspired moments. More often Dante falls into this kind of error in relation to the prose, not of bare fact, but of thought. In his anxiety to utter the whole truth of his theme, and to make his work a kind of compend of philosophy and theology, he sometimes introduces definitions and expositions of doctrine, which are too abstract to be fused into unity with any poetic symbol; as, for instance, in the curious Aristotelian lecture on the relations of the soul and the body, which he puts into the mouth of the poet Statius.[1]

[1] *Purgatorio*, xxv.

Generally, however, the intractableness of Dante's theme is overcome partly by the Platonic cast of his thoughts, to which we have already referred, and partly by the realising force of imagination with which these thoughts are grasped. The synthetic power of poetry, which individualises all that is universal, is made the servant of the philosophic synthesis, which overcomes abstraction by grasping ideas in their relations. The passage in the thirteenth canto of the *Paradiso*, where St. Thomas is made to expound the scale of being, and the parallel passage in the first canto, are good instances of the way in which Dante conquers this difficulty. And it is remarkable that he succeeds, not by expansion, but by compression of thought; in other words, he makes the conceptions of philosophy and theology poetic, not by diluting them in metaphors, but by a concentrated intensity of expression, which suggests the connection of each part with the whole, and the presence of the whole in every part.

What, then, is Dante's theme? To this Dante himself gives an answer which might at first sight seem inconsistent with the very nature of poetry, as a direct sensuous present-

ment of its object. In his letter to Can Grande della Scala, to whom he dedicates the *Paradiso*, he declares that the subject of the *Commedia*, taken literally, is the state of souls after death. But he goes on to say that if the work be taken allegorically, its subject is man, as by the good or ill use of his freedom he becomes worthy of reward or punishment.

Now, many modern critics might be disposed to say that to play in this way with double meanings is necessarily to lose the immediate appeal of poetry to our inner perception, and to "sickly o'er the native hues" of imagination "with a pale cast of thought." Nor can we escape the force of this objection by saying that the allegory is an after-thought, which occurred to Dante only when his poem was completed, and did not affect him during its composition. On the contrary, during the course of the poem he frequently directs our attention to the "subtle veil" under which he half conceals and half reveals a higher truth: and this deeper meaning is suggested to us not only by the numerous symbolic figures which are introduced at each stage of our progress, but by the main lines of

the structure of the *Commedia*. Even this might be regarded by some as a concession which was forced upon Dante by the ideas of his time. But, when we look more closely, we see that such a double meaning is no mere literary convention, but that it is inwrought into the very essence of Dante's work. It was, in fact, the necessary condition which he had to fulfil, in order to be, what Carlyle calls him, "the spokesman of ten silent centuries." If Dante was to give poetic expression to the consciousness of the Middle Ages, it was as necessary for him to live in two worlds at once as for Homer to live in one. What characterised the Homeric age was its fresh sense of the reality of life and its interests; hence the poet of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* could introduce the world of the dead only as a shadowy and spectral existence at the extreme verge of his picture of the living world. But to the highest consciousness of the Middle Ages it might almost be said that the parts were inverted, and that the world of the living was but a shadowy appearance, through which the eternal realities of another world were continually betraying them-

selves. The poet who made himself the interpreter of such a time was obliged to encounter all the difficulties of this strange division of man's being. He must draw his picture, as it were, on windows lightened by an unseen sun. However alien it might seem to the nature of poetry, or at least to the ordinary theory of its nature, he had to live in an atmosphere of double meanings, of crosslights and symbolic references, in which nothing was taken for simply itself; and yet, in spite of this, he had to be "simple, sensuous, and passionate," in order to be a poet at all.

It is his strange success in this apparently impossible task that gives the unique character to Dante's achievement. His poem seems as if it were constructed to refute all the ordinary canons of poetic criticism, and to prove that genius is its own law. But the key to the difficulty is not very hard to discover. It is just through the symbolic nature of his theme that Dante finds his way back to poetic truth and reality. It is because the other world, as he fixes his eyes upon it, turns for him into an enlarged and idealised counterpart of this world,

because its eternal kingdoms of "Hell," "Purgatory," and "Paradise," are for him the symbol of the powers which underlie and control the confusing struggle of human life, that Dante is able to give to his journey through all these supernatural kingdoms the vivid force of natural realisation. Hence it may fairly be said, that it is just because the *Commedia* is symbolic that it is true. Accepting the dualism of the Middle Age, Dante can transcend it only by the double reflection of each world upon the other.

The meaning of this last statement will become clearer, if we consider for a moment the nature and origin of that dualism. It arose out of the opposition of Christianity to the ancient forms of life which it had to overcome. As in every great revolution by which a new principle of life has been introduced into human history, it was to be expected that the negative side of Christianity should be the first to manifest itself. Till the enemy was conquered, it was impossible that he should be recognised as not altogether an enemy. The materialism and sensualism, which were partly consequences of the fact that ancient

civilisation was in process of decay, made it all but impossible for the Christian, under the fresh inspiration of the most idealistic faith which the world had ever seen, to admit any kindred between the new life and the old. The Church was necessarily militant against the world, till the world was subdued. Only after the first shock of antagonism had ceased, and the new society was secure in itself, did it become possible for it to see that there were many elements in the old system which might be appropriated by it, and used as materials for the new social structure. And it was not till centuries had passed, not indeed till the present age, that it could be discerned that there is a deeper root of unity, from which all religions and civilisations spring, and in view of which even such a change as the introduction of Christianity must be regarded as a step in the development of one life.

Christianity was, therefore, at the outset, and in the eyes both of those who accepted and of those who rejected it, a revolutionary idealism, which, as it turned the cross into the highest symbol of honour, seemed to invert all the old standards of excellence, and all the old criteria of truth.

"Those who have turned the world upside down are come hither also."

The characteristic of the new religion, which was most prominent in the minds of its earliest converts, is the antithetic abruptness of its inversion of the outward, and, we may even say, of the inward order of ancient life; and it was the apparent lawlessness involved in this revolution which turned the prejudice of the world against it. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek," is the birth song of the new creed; and St. Paul, who made the first steps toward turning the immediate utterance of Christian feeling into a theory, is continually insisting on the theme that "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty."

The same thing seen from the outside made the Roman emperors regard Christianity as the most fatal and horrible of superstitions, a superstition which inspired the dregs of society with a subversive madness, and made them for the first time unsubmissive to the firm hand of Roman discipline. It is true that Christianity was not outwardly revolutionary in its immediate aims.

It preached submission to lawful authority, and not revolt; and it recognised even the empire that persecuted it as, in a sense, "ordained of God." But the instinct of its enemies was true. It submitted, not because it accepted the world's law, but because it stood so far off from that law that it could easily avoid any conflict with it: because, in the idealism of its faith, it could treat the whole order of secular life as something extraneous and indifferent. The Christian slave endured his chains, because slavery and mastery, the dunghill or the throne, could matter little or nothing to one whose citizenship was in heaven. Such a doctrine hid its revolutionary power in the excess of its spiritualism. But the imperial instinct of Rome recognised that such submission was treacherous, and that the political system of the empire must necessarily be destroyed by the development of a principle, which it could neither assimilate nor overcome. The Church steadily grew and increased within the empire, at once using it, and exhausting its energy by the invasive power of its stronger spiritual life, till in the course of time the imperial authority had to choose between extinction and submission.

The intellectual narrowness that hinders men from grasping more than one aspect of a great principle at one time, and even the limitations of human speech, are continually tending to exaggerate relative into absolute opposition, and to reduce unity into identity. And, as in its distinctive maxim, "Die to live," Christianity contained the germ at once of a deeper antagonism, and of a more comprehensive reconciliation, between the different elements of man's nature, than any previous system, it was inevitable that in its development it should sway between the two extreme poles of Manichæan Dualism and a Pantheism in which all difference of good and evil was lost; though it could not identify itself either with the one or the other without losing its distinctive character.

The necessity of conquering other forms of belief and of contending with the materialism of ancient civilisation tended at first to throw emphasis upon the negative rather than upon the positive aspect of the Christian maxim. And this tendency was seconded by the order of thought in the maxim itself, which involved that self-realisation should be sought through self-sacrifice. The con-

sequence was that the early Church threw all its weight in this direction, and viewed its own life as essentially opposed to that of the kingdoms of this world, which it expected soon to be subverted by the second coming of Christ. It is, however, noticeable that, in its earliest form, Christianity is less hopeless of the world, less dualistic than it afterwards became: even the Millenarian idea being itself a witness that the first Christians saw no incongruity in the idea that this world should be directly turned into the kingdom of God, or in the hope that, without passing through the gate of death, the faithful should have their mortal nature transformed entirely by the power of the new life. The explanation of this lies partly in the fact that the first Christians received the principle of Christianity in its unevolved completeness, before the tendency to emphasise one side of it had gained strength. Still more it lay in the natural confidence of those who first felt the inspiring power of the new faith, and who had not yet learned to estimate the obstacles that stood between the simple acceptance of the Christian principle in its unexplained generality,

and the realisation of it in a complete system of life and thought.

In the first intuitive apprehension of a new idea of life everything seems at once to be attained. In its universality men seem to possess a present infinity, a principle of unlimited good, which can be resisted by nothing because it includes everything. In this sense Hegel speaks of the infinite value of the unenfolded religious emotion, as it exists in the breast of the simplest man who has felt its power. But, in another point of view, an idea so apprehended is merely a germ, which as yet has shown as little of what it contains or of the real results to which it will grow, as the acorn shows of the future oak. In the course of the second century, when the first fervour of hope and faith was over, it began to be seen that the perfect fruition of the Christian ideal could not be grasped at once. The immediate hope of a sudden divine change of the world was lost, and with it, we might almost say, the hope of a realisation of Christianity in this world. The first steps toward the building up of an organised community of Christians brought with them a

consciousness of the immense hindrances, inward and outward, which stood in the way of the realisation of a kingdom of heaven upon earth. And, though the idea that human nature is capable of a complete purification and regeneration could not be lost without the loss of Christianity itself, the belief began to prevail that such completion can be attained only in another world.

Hence the apparent contradiction that the principle of Christianity comes to be regarded as unrealisable, just at the time when the first steps are taken to realise it. It is when the Church has begun to establish itself as one of the political powers of the world, that the expectation of a kingdom of God on earth all but disappears, and Christianity becomes decisively an other-world faith—the hope of a victory to be won, and a fruition to be enjoyed, only beyond the grave. In like manner, it is when the Christian idea has ceased to be a simple consciousness of relation to Christ, when it has put itself in relation to the philosophy of the ancient world and begun to develop into a system of doctrine, that the distinction of faith and knowledge begins to be emphasised, and divine things begin to be re-

garded as altogether beyond the sphere of the understanding of man.

In the New Testament, and especially in the Epistles of St. Paul, the minor note of sadness—which can never be entirely absent from the expression of the Christian consciousness—is sometimes all but lost in the hope of a joy to be revealed in the near future; and sorrow takes the aspect of a passing shadow, which is soon to disappear from the new heavens and the new earth. But with the apostolic age this confident spirit passes away, and life begins to be regarded as a pilgrimage in a foreign land, in which the Christian has continually to contend with enemies without and within, and no fruition corresponding to his hopes is to be expected. Existence is thus, as it were, projected into a future beyond the grave, and even the Church is conceived not as the kingdom of God realised on earth, but as an ark of refuge, in which man is to be carried through the storms of life to his true fatherland.

It was by the aid of this conception, which practically deferred the realisation of its ideal to another world, that the Church was enabled to

retain that ideal, and yet partly to reconcile itself to the conditions of its existence in a society still only half civilised, and organised on principles alien to Christianity. For the division which was thus made between the secular and the sacred, if in one point of view it tended to exalt the Church at the expense of the State, yet supplied an excuse to the former for tolerating in the latter a kind of life that was not in harmony with its own principles. In this way the revolutionary tendencies of Christianity, the demands of its idealistic morality, and its purely spiritual criteria of judgment were retained, and yet made reconcilable with acquiescence in the *status quo*, and even with a conservative alliance with the existing political powers. The kingdoms of this world were allowed to subsist, nay, their authority was consecrated, by a Church which repudiated all their principles of life and government; and the doctrine that this life is merely a preparation for another enabled Christianity to be used as an anodyne to reconcile men to the injustices under which they were suffering, rather than as a call to change the institutions which caused such evils. On the other hand,

the Church, at least in its dedicated orders, in its priests, monks, and nuns, sought to realise within itself that higher life which it refrained from demanding from the world. But even here the same antagonism betrayed itself; and the three vows of the "religious" life turned Christianity into an ascetic struggle against nature. Yet such asceticism could not be based on the idea (which underlay earlier ascetic systems) that the natural passions or feelings are in themselves evil. Such a Manichæan division, discordant as it was felt to be with the doctrine of a divine humanity, was once for all rejected and refuted by the first great speculative genius of the Western Church, St. Augustine.

It remained that asceticism should be conceived as a stage of transition, and that the object of it should be taken to be, not to root out nature, but only to purify it. Nature must die to itself that it might live to God, but it could so die without perishing; it could rise again to a new spiritual life without ceasing to be nature. Nay, if the mediæval saint could believe that nature had so "died to live," he could even accept its voice as divine. On this point, however, he was

very difficult to reassure ; he was, indeed, scarcely willing to admit that the spiritual death of nature, which is the beginning of a higher life, could come before the natural death of the body. Hence the highest morality, the morality of the cloister, remained for him negative and ascetic, and, if he ever regarded it as a preparation for a positive morality in which impulse and duty should be made one, it was in a future life only that he expected such an ideal to be realised. The tender feminine voice of mediæval piety, its self-repression and submission to an evil present, its ardent longing for a glory to be revealed, its self-mortification and renunciation of the world, and its exultant consciousness that everything it lost would one day be regained, its combination of all-levelling love with the resigned acceptance of a social state in which men were held down and held asunder by the most fixed class-divisions, were the natural results of this curious compromise. Christianity had brought together so many apparently inconsistent elements of thought and feeling, that in the first instance it was possible for them to be combined only by distributing them between two worlds. But, after all, it was one mind that lived

in both: it was one spirit which was thus divorced from itself, and which was at the same time engaged in a continual effort to overcome the division.

Dante comes at the end of the Middle Ages, and, as has already been indicated, it was his work to bring the mediæval spirit to a consciousness of itself and so to carry it beyond itself. He does so, however, not by the rejection of any of its characteristic modes of thought. He does not, like some of his immediate successors, recoil from the one-sided spiritualism of the Middle Ages, and set against it a naturalistic delight in the beauty of the world of sense. Nor does he rise to that higher perception of the spiritual in the natural which has inspired the best modern poetry. He was no Boccaccio or Heine, raising the standard of revolt in the name of mere nature against all that hindered her free development. Nor was he a Shakspere or Goethe who could spiritualise the natural by force of insight into its deeper meaning. But, accepting without a shadow of a doubt or hesitation all the constitutive ideas of mediæval thought and life, he grasped them so firmly and gave them such luminous expression that the spirit in them broke away from the form. The force of imaginative realisation

with which he saw and represented the supernaturalism, the other-worldliness, the combined rationalism and mysticism of the Middle Age, already carried in it a new idea of life. In this view we might say that Dante was the last of mediæval and the first of modern writers. To show that this is the case will be the object of the remainder of this essay.

We may best realise this aspect of Dante's poem by regarding it in three different points of view, and by considering how he deals with three contrasts or antagonisms which run through all mediæval thought and life—though, indeed, they may rather be regarded as different aspects of one great antagonism: *first*, with the antagonism between this and the other world; *secondly*, with the antagonism between the Empire and the Church, with which in Dante's mind is closely connected the opposition between faith and reason, or between theology and philosophy; and, *finally*, with the antagonism between the natural and the spiritual, or between the morality of self-denial and the morality of self-realisation.

1. It has already been pointed out that mediæval religion tended to regard the world as a sphere in

which man is prepared for a better life, but which has no substantial worth in itself. "This is not our home," "the native land, the *patria* of the soul, is in heaven," "we are pilgrims and sojourners, who seek for a city that hath foundations." In such sayings we find the distinctive note of mediæval piety, the source at once of its weakness and its strength, of its almost fatalistic resignation to suffering, and of its consoling power. The other world is the inheritance of those who have failed in this; and the sense of failure, the sense that man is utterly powerless in himself, had in this period altogether expelled the joyous self-confidence of ancient virtue.

This change may be traced to many causes. The sufferings of an age of war and oppression, the insecurity of a time when the tribal bonds of barbarous society were being dissolved, and when the unity of modern nations was not yet established, may furnish a partial explanation; but still more is due to the agonies of fear and remorse, which took the place of the self-confident animalism and rude freedom of the Teutonic races when brought into the presence of the new spiritual light of Christianity, and to the ascetic recoil from all secular interests,

which, as we have seen, was the necessary result of the first conflict of Christian ideas with a world they could not yet transform. These causes tended to develop a kind of religion which withdrew man from the interests of the present, and, as it were, transferred the centre of gravity of his life beyond the grave. Such a religion was in essential contrast with the religions of classical antiquity, which were in the main worships of a divine principle revealed in the family and the State. And it was equally in contrast with the religion of the Jews, which, if it took men beyond the present, yet did not lift them out of this world, but only carried them forward to a better future for their race.

It has often been felt as a difficulty by modern students of the history of religion, that ancient religions dwelt so little on the concerns of another world; but it is a difficulty only because the mediæval stamp has been so strongly impressed on our minds that, like Kant, we are ready to say that "without a belief in a future state no religion can be conceived." But the inspiring power of religion for most of the peoples of antiquity lay, mainly at least, in the view which it led them to take of this rather than of another world. Medi-

æval Christianity, on the other hand, turned the Jewish aspiration after a better future on earth into a belief that man's good can be realised, and his happiness attained, only in heaven. And, for what was thus lost in the inspiring power of the consciousness of a divine purpose realising itself in the present life of man, it tried to make up by the idea of the present life as a preparatory discipline for another.

Now, it is easy to see that such a belief is susceptible of many shades of meaning. It is capable of sinking into the coarsest superstition which barters a joy here for a joy of no higher character in the life to come. Yet, even in that case it may be said, that the joys that are not seen, the desires that cannot be gratified here and now, are by that very fact changed and elevated in character; if for no other reason, at least because a joy not possessed is always idealised by imagination. And it may be further said that even mediæval Christianity, if it caught men at first by sensuous fears and hopes, contained in itself a provision for their gradual idealisation, as the nature of the Christian life became better known. It admitted of a sort of sliding scale of interpretation from the mere super-

stitious fear of the vengeance of God to the most saintly desire for inward purity. Still, so long as it laid such exclusive emphasis on the idea of another life—which was broken off from this life by a chasm that could not be filled up—so long as its supernatural was not the natural seen in its ideal truth, but, so to speak, another natural world somewhat differently constituted, so long mediæval religion wanted something which, *e.g.*, even Greek religion possessed. The division of the religious from the secular vocation of man was necessarily a source of disharmony in all his existence. It led naturally and almost inevitably to a separation between divine service and that service of God which is only another aspect of the service of man —a separation which turns religion into superstition, and deprives morality of its ideal character.

Now in Dante's great poem the mediæval form of representation is strictly preserved. Human life is viewed as essentially a preparation for another world, whose awful reality throughout overshadows it, and reduces its interests almost into an object of contempt, except when they are viewed in relation to that world. "O, wretched man, do ye not see that we are worms produced only to contain the angelic

butterfly, which flies to justice without a covering," is one of many similar utterances; and in a remarkable passage in the *Paradiso*, where Dante represents himself as looking down upon the earth from the highest heaven, he makes the minuteness of its apparent size a symbol of the littleness of earthly things as seen from the heavenly point of view. Yet, after all, the eternal world which he exhibits to us is just this world seen *sub specie æternitatis*, this world as it is to one who views it in its moral aspect. And, as we see from the letter to Can Grande della Scala already quoted, Dante means it to be so understood. Thus taken, the *Inferno* and the *Paradiso* are simply Evil and Good in the full development of their abstract opposition, and the *Purgatorio* is simply this world, regarded as a scene of moral struggle and purification. Hence, both in the *Inferno* and in the *Paradiso*, Dante attempts to make the woe and the joy as closely as possible the visible expression of character, which finds its doom in being fixed for ever in its characteristic act or attitude; and in the *Purgatorio* the same sufferings — which in the *Inferno* had been the penal return of the crime upon the criminal—become the purifying pains

through which he frees himself from his sin. Or, looking at it in a slightly different point of view, the descent of Dante through the circles of the "Inferno" is an imaginative picture of the process of moral degradation, and his ascent through the Purgatorial mount, together with his upward flight through the Heavens, is the corresponding vision of the process of moral renovation.

It is in accordance with this idea that, in the upper circles of the "Inferno," Dante begins with the sins of passion, of inordinate indulgence in some finite good, with lust, gluttony, avarice, and prodigality, making the punishment in each case a kind of symbol of the crime, or, as has just been said, the return of the crime upon the criminal. Those who have yielded to lawless desire are blown about in the dark whirlwind. The avaricious and the prodigal are doomed to the endless task of rolling heavy weights backward and forward, each undoing the other's work. Lowest among the sins of passion Dante puts the discontent which wastes its energy in fretting against the limits of earthly satisfaction, and will not look kindly upon the light of day.[1] Those who have

[1] Cf. Mr. Harris' essay on "The Spiritual Sense of the Divina Commedia," in the American *Journal of Speculative*

been thus morose and sullen in their lives are plunged in the deep mire, where they continually keep up a monotonous complaint. "Sad were we above in the sweet air, which is brightened by the sun, bearing in our hearts a lazy smoke that hid its light from our eyes; now are we sad in the black mire." In the next circle is punished the sin of heresy, which is for Dante the deliberate acceptance of the principle of evil in place of the principle of good, or, in other words, the denial of that higher idea of life which raises man above the animals. Those who have thus shut their minds to *il ben del intelletto* are prisoned in fiery tombs. Out of this root of evil principle, according to Dante's way of thinking, spring all the sins of malevolence, of hate of God and man, beginning in violence and ending in deceit and treachery in all its kinds, which, as involving the utmost corruption of man's peculiar gift of reason, are punished in the lowest circles of the "Inferno."

In the *Purgatorio* the principle of good is supposed to have been restored, and therefore suffering has ceased to be penal, and has changed into the

Philosophy, for October 1887, which has suggested some of the above remarks.

purifying pains by which men free themselves from evil. Hence, though there is nothing here exactly corresponding to the lower circles of the "Inferno," the lowest terraces of the Purgatorial mountain have still to purge away some remaining stains of the baser forms of sin—stains of pride, envy, and anger—which make a man seek his own good in opposition to the good of his neighbours. In the fourth circle, man's purification from *accidia*—that torpid and relaxed temper of mind which refuses to be stimulated to action either by divine love or by the desire of finite good—prepares the way for his purgation, in the three highest terraces, from sins of passion, sins in which man gives to finite good the love that should be reserved for the infinite.

Finally, the heavenly journey of Dante carries us up through all the finer shades of spiritual excellence, beginning with the devotion that is not yet unswerving in purpose, the love that still clings to the charm of sense, and the practical virtue which is still haunted by the "last infirmity of noble minds," and ending with the passionate faithfulness of crusaders like Dante's ancestor, Cacciaguida, the pure zeal for

justice of kings like Godfrey of Jerusalem, and the perfect devotion of monastic sainthood, whether seraphic in love with St. Francis, or cherubic in wisdom with St. Dominic.

In all this Dante holds to the mediæval point of view, in so far as he makes this world altogether secondary and subordinate to the other; yet he escapes the mediæval dualism by exhibiting the other world as simply the clear revelation of ideal forces which are hidden from us amid the confused phenomena of our earthly existence. In effect, though not in so many words, the postponement of this world to the other comes simply to mean the postponement of appearance to reality, of the outward show and semblance of life to the spiritual powers that are working in and through it. It is, therefore, no mere afterthought when, in his letter to Can Grande, Dante bids us regard the description of the other world as symbolic of the truth about man's life here. We might even, from this point of view, be tempted to regard Dante's representation of the other world as a mere artistic form under which the universal meaning of our present life is conveyed. For, even if Dante did not mean

to say this, his work says it to us. His poetical handling of the idea of another life tends to remove from it all that is conventional and arbitrary, and to turn it into the appropriate expression of an ever present moral reality. And, though some elements of the horror and brutality of the mediæval conception of retribution are still retained in harsh discords of the *Inferno*, and some of the childishness, which mingled with the childlike purity of mediæval piety, in the dances and songs of the *Paradiso*, we may, perhaps, compare these things to the unfinished parts of the statues of Michael Angelo, which exhibit the material the artist had to use, and heighten our consciousness of his power by a glimpse of the difficulty with which he was struggling.

2. In mediæval thought the opposition between this and the other world was closely connected with the second opposition to which reference has been made, the opposition between the Empire and the Church, between politics and religion, and also, as Dante holds, between philosophy and theology. In Dante's prose treatise, the *De Monarchia*, we have an argument in regular

scholastic form, in which he tries to defend his own reading of the politico-ecclesiastical ideal of the Middle Age, which was expressed in the maxim: "One God, one Pope, one Emperor." The following quotation gives the substance of Dante's view:

"If man is a mean between the corruptible and the incorruptible, like every other mean, he must have something in him of both extremes. Further, as every nature is constituted in view of some ultimate end, man, who partakes of two natures, must be constituted in view of a twofold end. Two ends, therefore, the ineffable wisdom of Providence has set before his efforts; to wit, the beatitude of this life, which consists in the exercise of his proper virtue, and which is figured to us by the Terrestrial Paradise; and the beatitude of eternal life, which consists in the fruition of the divine vision, and which is represented by the Celestial Paradise. To these different beatitudes, as to different results, we can attain only through different means. To the former we attain by the teaching of philosophy, which guides us in the exercise of the moral and intellectual virtues. To the latter we attain by means of those spiritual teachings which transcend human reason, and which guide us in the exercise of the theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity. These ends and the means to them are exhibited to us, on the one hand, by human reason expressing itself in its fulness in the philosophers, and, on the other hand, by the Holy Spirit, which, through the prophets and sacred writers, through the Eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ, and His disciples, has revealed to us a truth which is beyond

nature. But, in spite of all these evidences, human passion would inevitably disregard both the earthly and the heavenly end, unless men, like horses, had their brutal lusts restrained with bit and bridle. Hence there was needed, in order to bring man securely to his double end, a double directing power: to wit, the Holy Pontiff, to guide him, in accordance with Revelation, to eternal life; and the Emperor, to direct him to temporal felicity, in accordance with the precepts of philosophy. And since none or few, and these only with the utmost difficulty, could attain to this haven, unless the waves of deceitful lust were quelled, and the human race enabled to enjoy the freedom and tranquillity of peace, *this*, above all, is the aim to which the Curator of the world, who is called the Roman Prince, should direct all his efforts: to wit, that in this mortal sphere life may be freely passed in peace. . . . . It is clear, then, that the authority of the temporal monarch descends to him without any medium from the fountain of all authority—that fountain which, one and simple in its lofty source, flows out into many channels in the abundance of the divine goodness. . . . . This, however, is not to be taken as meaning that the Roman Emperor is in *nothing* subject to the Roman Pontiff; for that mortal happiness, of which we have been speaking, itself has a farther end in the happiness which is immortal. Let then Cæsar pay such reverence to Peter as a first-born son owes to his father, that, illumined by his paternal grace, he may, with greater virtue, irradiate the whole circle of the world, over which he is placed by Him alone, who is the ruler of all things temporal and spiritual."

The ideas which Dante thus expresses in prose

govern the whole movement of the *Commedia*. They explain the contrast between the two guides of Dante—Virgil and Beatrice—the former of whom is immediately taken as the representative of philosophy and of the teachings of reason, and indirectly also of the Roman imperial power which Dante regarded as the source of that secular moral discipline by which man is taught the cardinal virtues of the secular life; while the latter speaks for a theology based on revelation, and maintains the necessity of that discipline in the three theological virtues, which it is the function of the Church to supply.

The great evil of his time, according to Dante, was that these two different functions had been confused, that the Empire and the Church had become rivals instead of complements of each other, and that by this dislocation of the governing power, the whole life of man had been thrown into disorder: "Ye may well see that it is ill guidance that has made the world stray from good, and not any corruption of the nature of man. Rome, that once gave peace to the earth, was wont to have two suns. Now that one has quenched the other, and the sword has joined with

the pastoral staff, they must both wander from the path. For, so united, the one fears not the other."[1]

As is manifest from this passage, the main responsibility for the perversion of the divine order of life, lay, in Dante's opinion, with the Church, and especially with the Papacy, which, as he held, had abandoned its proper functions, and had grasped at the imperial authority. For, by this policy, the Papacy alienated its natural ally, and gave opportunity for the undisciplined licence of the communes and the sanguinary ambition of France, to which the Papacy itself ere long became a victim. And the main cure for this state of things which Dante requires and prophesies is, that some great emperor or servant of the empire, some Henry VII. or Can Grande, should appear to drive back to hell the wolf, *Cupidigia—i.e.*, to repress the greedy ambition which had thrown the world into disorder, and to restore the Church to its original purity, the purity it had before the fatal gift of Constantine had begun to draw it into the arena of worldly politics.

Dante, therefore, seeks for the reversal of the whole course of policy by which the Church,

[1] *Purgatorio*, xvi. 103.

especially after the time of Gregory the Great, had sought to establish its secular authority. He would strip the Church of her wealth in order to make her trust only in spiritual weapons. In the *Inferno*, Dante breaks out into taunts and rejoicings over the just fate of the simoniacal popes. "Tell me how much gold our Lord required of St. Peter, when He put the keys into his charge? Verily he demanded of him nought, but 'Follow me.'"[1] On the other hand, his intensest sympathy is reserved for the new orders of mendicant friars, who sought to bring back the simplicity of the Gospel, and his severest denunciations are for those who have corrupted the original purity of these orders, and of the Church in general.

This enables us to understand an often-discussed passage in which Dante puts among those contemptible beings—who "were neither faithful nor rebellious, but were for themselves," and who are therefore "hateful to God and to his enemies"—one who is characterised only as "the man who, through meanness, made the grand renunciation."[2] This we are told by all the older commentators

[1] *Inferno*, xix. 91. [2] *Inferno*, iii. 60.

of Dante refers to Pope Celestine, who resigned the papacy, and was succeeded by Boniface VIII. The contempt of Dante for this simple monk, who shrank from a burden which he could not bear, is to be understood only if we regard it as an expression of the disappointment of those who, in Celestine, saw a representative of the pure unworldly view of the functions of the Church lifted to the throne of Christendom, and who then saw him confess himself unequal to the mission thus committed to him. Dante sympathized with the resentment of the so-called "spiritual Franciscans," those who sought to maintain, in all its strictness, the original law of St. Francis as to poverty—when, after a short interval, they saw worldly policy restored to the papal throne in the person of Boniface. Jacopone di Todi, the poet of the *Spiritual Brethren*, attacked Boniface with accusations of sacrilege, heresy and avarice, and in the *Paradiso* St. Peter is made to pronounce him a usurper. But for Celestine, whose selfish saintliness was not capable of sustaining contact with the world, and whose pusillanimity lost, as it seemed, the greatest of all opportunities, Dante reserves his bitterest word of contempt.

Now it is easy enough to see that Dante's ideal of a universal Church, standing side by side with a universal Empire, protected by the empire, and by its unworldliness saved from all collision therewith, was impracticable, was indeed incapable of realisation in *both* its aspects. The universality of the Empire was, even at the best, *magni nominis umbra*, and the assertion of its claims invariably brought it into collision with the privileges of the Church: and the Church, on the other hand, not seldom found itself driven to maintain those privileges by excommunicating the emperor and calling on his subjects to rebel. The emperors could not uphold law and order in their dominions without interfering with the spiritual courts and curtailing the rights of the clergy, and the popes saw no way of securing the independence of the Church except by asserting its claim to rule over the world. Thus the essential contradiction of the attempt to divide human life into two halves, and to determine definitely what was Cæsar's, and what was God's, showed itself in the logic of facts.

Yet undoubtedly the idea of such a separation, which would leave each in possession of

all its legitimate prerogatives, and should completely secure it from coming into collision with the other, was the political ideal of the Middle Age, an ideal which was the necessary outcome of the way in which the Christian Church had for centuries been existing or endeavouring to exist, as a community in the world yet not of it. Hence Dante was only following out that ideal in its most logical form, when he demanded that the Church should return to its original purity, and should withdraw from all interference with the interests of the world, and that the Empire should again become all-powerful over man's secular life, as it seemed to have been before the Church became its rival. We might perhaps say that in this view of Dante's we find a culminating instance of the mediæval method of escaping all difficulties by a "Distinguo"—*i.e.*, of using a distinction to make a kind of truce between elements which it could not bring together in a true reconciliation. By absolutely separating the Empire and the Church, Dante conceived it to be possible to restore harmony between them.

And, indeed, it is true that such abstract op-

posites, if they could exist, would cease to come into collision, because they would cease to come into contact. Unfortunately, at the same time in which they thus cease to affect each other, they lose all meaning, as abstractions which have no longer any reference to the whole from which they were abstracted. Thus in Dante's treatise, *De Monarchia*, from which the above quotation is taken, the Empire is represented as an omnipotent justice, which, because omnipotent, has no special interest of its own, and therefore is freed from all temptation to injustice; while the Church is conceived as reaching the same ideal purity by the opposite way—*i.e.*, by detaching itself from all finite interests whatever.

The real lesson to be learnt from such an abstract opposition is just the reverse of that to which it apparently points. It is that the opposing forces can never cease to be rivals, and are therefore never safe from impure compromises, until they are brought to a unity as complementary manifestations of one principle of life, which at once reveals itself in their difference, and overcomes it. The problem is not to divide the world between God and Cæsar, or, as we should now say,

between God and Humanity, but to give all to God in giving all to Humanity, Humanity being conceived, not as a collection of individuals, but as an organism in which the Divine Spirit reveals Himself. Of this solution there is no trace in Dante, nor could any unbiassed interpreter suppose that, beneath the form of adhesion to the mediæval duality of Church and Empire, he conceals the idea of their essential unity. What gives a colour of reason to such an idea is merely that the new wine of Dante's poetry *does* burst the old bottles of mediæval philosophy; or, in other words, that he so states the mediæval ideal that he makes us see it to be in hopeless antagonism with reality and with itself, and at the same time to carry in it the germ of a new form of social life.

3. A more definite anticipation of this new order of ideas may, however, be found in Dante's treatment of the last of the three contrasts to which reference has been made. It is true that Dante repeats after St. Augustine and St. Thomas the conception of a twofold truth, a truth of reason which is determined by reason alone, and a truth of faith which is primarily due to revelation. And as a necessary consequence of this, he ac-

cepts the idea of a twofold morality, a morality of the four *cardinal* virtues, which are acquired by habit and teaching on the basis of nature, and a morality of the three *theological* virtues, which are entirely the effect of supernatural inspiration. Hence the continually increasing danger and darkness of his descent through the circles of the Inferno, and the hopeful but slow and laborious nature of his ascent over the terraces of the Purgatorial Hill, are put in contrast with his swift upward flight through the planetary heavens, in which he is conscious of no effort, but only of the vision of Beatrice and of her growing brightness.

But the theological barrier between the human and the divine which Dante thus acknowledges, and which, we may even say, he builds into the structure of his poem, is removed or reduced to a merely relative difference when we consider its inner meaning. In the exaltation of Beatrice, two very different ideals of life are united, and two different streams of poetry, which had run separate up to the time of Dante, are concentrated in a common channel. The chivalrous worship of woman, which grew up in connection with the in-

stitutions of feudalism, is combined with that adoration of divine love, as embodied in the Virgin Mother, which gave tenderness to the piety of the saints. The hymn of worship, in which the passionate devotion of St. Francis and Jacopone di Todi found utterance, absorbs into itself the love-ballad of the Troubadour, and the imaginative expression of natural feeling is purified and elevated by union with the religious aspirations of the cloister.

Thus poetry brings ideas which had been separated by the widest "space in nature" to "join like likes, and kiss like native things." Dante's poetic idealism—with that levelling power which is characteristic of all idealism, and above all of the idealism of Christianity—sets aside all the hindrances that had prevented human and divine love from coalescing. Or, perhaps, we should rather say that he approximates *as nearly* to this result as the mediæval dualism will let him, retaining the mark of his time only in the fact that the natural passion which he idealises is one which was fed with hardly any earthly food, but only with a few words and looks, and which was soon consecrated by death. Thus the

ascetic ideal of purity, which shuns like poison the immediate touch of sense, claims its tribute; but when this tribute has been paid, Dante has no further scruple in following the impulse of natural emotion which bids him identify his earthly love with the highest object of his reverence, with the divine wisdom itself. Thus, in the adoration of Beatrice, the Platonic idealisation of ἔρως is interwoven with the Christian worship of a divine Humanity; and a step is made towards that renewed recognition of the sacredness of natural feelings and relations, by which modern is distinguished from mediæval ethics.

Again, Dante accepts the mediæval idea of the superiority of the contemplative to the active life. This idea was the natural result of the ascetic and mystic view of religion which separates the love of God from the love of man, and regards the service of the latter as partly withdrawing our eyes from the direct vision of the former. "To love God *secundum se*," says St. Thomas, "is more meritorious than to love one's neighbour. Now, the contemplative life directly and immediately pertains to the love of God, while the active life directly points to the love of our

neighbour."[1] Such a doctrine, if logically carried out, would involve an opposition of the universal principle of morality to all the particulars that ought to come under it; or, to express the same thing theologically, it would involve a conception of God as a mere Absolute Being, who is not revealed in His creatures—a conception irreconcilable with the Christian idea of the unity of the divine and the human. The natural inference from such a conception would be that we must turn away from the finite in order to bring ourselves into relation with the infinite. But, in Dante, the identification of Beatrice with the divine wisdom, or, what is the same thing, the representation of the divine wisdom as individualised and embodied—and that not merely in Christ or in the saints, but in the human form that was nearest to the poet's affection—practically counteracts this tendency, and involves a reassertion of the positive side of Christianity as against the over-emphasis which the Middle Age laid on its negative side.

It may, indeed, be said that, for Dante, the contemplative life remains still the highest. But

[1] *Summa Theol.* ii. 2, 182.

this is not altogether true, at least in the sense in which the above objection holds good. For there is a sense in which contemplation may be said to include and go beyond action—that, viz., in which religion includes and goes beyond morality. Religion does not lift man *out of* the practical struggle for good, but, in a sense, it lifts him *above* it. It turns morality from the effort after a distant and unattainable ideal into a consciousness of a divine power within and without us, of which all things are the manifestation ; and so it enables us to regard all things as working together for good, even those that seem most to oppose it. Religion is thus primarily contemplative, not as looking away from the world to God, nor as excluding the active life of relation to the world, but because it is a rest in the consciousness that the ultimate reality of things, the world as seen *sub specie æternitatis*, is at once rational and moral. And such a consciousness, though it gives the highest inspiration to moral activity, does so by removing much of the pain of effort, and especially much of the feeling of hopelessness, which is apt to arise whenever moral effort is long continued against powerful obstacles.

So far, then, the addition of religion to morality tends to assimilate moral activity to Dante's swift and effortless ascent into heaven, to which, as we have seen, he is drawn upward simply by the vision of Beatrice. Not "I work," but "God worketh in me," is the genuine expression of religious feeling, and the source of its inspiring power. Dante puts the same idea in another way when he tells us that, if freed from the burden of sinful inclination, man cannot but follow the divine attraction of his nature, and inevitably rises to Paradise as to his natural place. "Thou shouldest not wonder at thy ascent," says Beatrice, "any more than that a stream descends from the top of the hill to the bottom. It would rather be a marvel if, freed from all impediment, thou didst remain below, *like living fire lying quietly on the ground.*"[1]

Thus in Dante's hands the one-sided exaltation of the contemplative life, which he accepts as part of the theological tradition of his time, becomes susceptible of an interpretation which removes all its one-sidedness. It is open for us to take it as expressing the truth that religion bases

[1] *Paradiso*, i. 139.

the "ought to be" of morality upon a deeper "is," and that the moral ideal is not merely a subjective hope or aspiration of the individual, but our best key to the nature of things. In a similar way the absolute distinction—which Dante, like the scholastic theologians whom he followed, is obliged to make—between the truths of faith and the truths of reason, finally resolves itself into this: that there are some truths which cannot be attained except by those "whose intelligence is ripened in the flame of love"[1]; or, in other words, some truths that must be felt and experienced before they can be known.

Considering all these points, we may fairly say that, orthodox as Dante is, his poem is the euthanasia of the dualistic theology and ethics of the Middle Ages. In spite of the horrors of his *Inferno*, which are the poetic reflection of the superstitious terrors of a half-barbarous age, and in spite of the monastic austerity and purity of his Paradise of light and music, which is like a glorified edition of the services of the Church, Dante interprets the religion of the cloister in such a way as to carry us beyond it. His *Divina*

[1] *Paradiso*, vii. 58.

Commedia may be compared to the portal of a great cathedral, through which we emerge from the dim religious light of the Middle Ages into the open day of the modern world, but emerge with the imperishable memory of those harmonies of form and colour on which we have been gazing and with the organ notes that lifted our soul to heaven still sounding in our ears.

GOETHE AND PHILOSOPHY.

THE "old quarrel of poets and philosophers," of which Plato speaks, is as far off from reconciliation as ever, and in one point of view we cannot wish it to be reconciled. It is far from desirable that poetry should ever become "a criticism of life," except in the sense in which beauty is always a criticism upon ugliness, or a good man upon a bad one; and it is quite as undesirable that philosophy should relax any of its effort to produce such a criticism, or, in other words, to set the deeper meaning of things against their superficial appearances. Each does best service by remaining within its own limits and keeping to its own ways of action. Yet there is undoubtedly a point—and that, indeed, the highest point in both—in which they come into close relations with each other. Hence, at least in the case of the greatest poets, we are driven by a kind of necessity to ask what was

their philosophy. A few words on the general relations of poetry and philosophy may make it easier to express what in this point of view we have to say about Goethe.

The poet, like the philosopher, is a seeker for truth, and we may even say for the same kind of truth. He may not, indeed, like the philosopher, separate the idea or principle from the immediate reality of things, but he must be so eager and passionate in his realism as to reach the ideal in it and through it. He must grasp the world of sense so firmly that it ceases to sting. If he remoulds the immediate facts of the world of experience, it must be by means of forces which are working in it as well as in himself, and which his own plastic genius only brings to clearer manifestation.

In some few cases, this poetic process of "widening nature without going beyond it,"[1] has been so successful that it becomes almost a futile curiosity to ask what were the materials which the poet has used, or the bare facts for which he has substituted his creations. The kernel has been so completely extracted that we are not concerned

[1] Schiller.

about the husk. If we could learn the circumstances of the Trojan War as a contemporary historian might chronicle them, we should not know nearly so much of the inner movement and development of the Greek spirit as Homer has told us; though we should probably find that Homer's story is nowhere a mere copy of the facts, but that it stands to them in somewhat the same relations in which the "Sorrows of Werther" stands to the accidents of Goethe's life in Welzlar, and the suicide of Jerusalem. The facts are changed, and a new world constructed out of the old by the shaping imagination of the poet, but the change is such that it seems to have taken place in the factory of Nature herself. The forces that work underground, and hide themselves from us beneath the appearances of human life, have, by the silent elaboration of poetic genius, forced their way to the surface, and transformed the appearances themselves. Hence the new creation has all the colours of life, and almost shames the so-called facts of every day by the sturdy force and reality of its presence. Thus before Shakespeare's characters most ordinary human beings seem like the shadows of the dead in Homer.

It is not that in these dramas a different life is set before us from that which men everywhere lead, but the passions and characters which, in conflict with each other and with circumstance, gradually work out their destiny, are in the poet's mind put into a kind of forcing-house, and made with rapid evolution to show their inner law and tendency in immediate results.

It is indeed only the greatest poets who are capable of thus making themselves, as it were, into organs by which nature reaches a further development. In all but the greatest we find a mixture of such creative reconstruction with what we can only call manufacture. The failing force of vision obliges them to hold together by mechanical means the elements which do not round themselves into an organic whole. And even to the greatest poets it is not granted to have a complete and continuous vision. Hence, except in the case of short "swallow-flights of song," which can be produced in one lyric burst of feeling, works of *pure* poetic art must be the result of much patient waiting and watching for the spirit; they cannot be perfected without much self-restraint and critical rejection of every element

which is not quite genuine. "That which limits us, the common or vulgar," and which by its presence at once turns poetry into prose, cannot be excluded except by a self-abnegation as great as that by which the scientific man puts aside all subjective pre-suppositions and "anticipations of nature."

For poetic truth does not lie on the surface any more than scientific truth. The *kinds* of truth are indeed widely different. The aim of the man of science is to distinguish the threads of necessity that bind together the most disparate phenomena, and in pursuit of these he seems, to one who looks at the immediate result, to be explaining away all the life and unity of the world, and putting everywhere mechanism for organism, even in the organic itself. On the other hand, the poet ignores or endeavours to get beyond the external mechanism of the world; he is ever seeking and finding life even among the dead. But only one who regards the abstractions of science as the ultimate truth of things, can take this process to be a mere play of subjective fancy, or can suppose that any great poetic creation is produced by an imagination which merely follows its own dreams and does not

bend to any objective law. It is even harder for the poet to eliminate from his work all that is not living, than for the scientific man to set aside the phantoms of life, the final causes, which disturb the prose of science. In both cases the individual has to put himself aside and let nature speak; but the poet listens for another voice, a "still small voice," which comes from a further depth. The extreme rarity of poetic works of a high order, in spite of the comparatively frequent appearance of a measure of poetic genius, shows how many and difficult are the conditions which must be satisfied in their production.

The poet, like the philosopher, is in search of a deeper truth in things than that which is the object of science. He seeks, as has been said, the unity and life which is hidden in the mechanism of the universe, and he who seeks truth in any form must be prepared for self-abnegating effort.

Yet we must not forget another characteristic of poetry by which it is separated at once from science and philosophy—viz., its spontaneous and even unconscious character. After all, the effort of the poet is to provide a free channel for a

power that works in him like a natural force. Wordsworth's criticism of Goethe's poetry, that it was not "inevitable enough" (a criticism which is singularly wide of the mark in regard to the best of Goethe's work), is an apt expression of this truth. Creative imagination is a power which is neither lawless, nor yet, strictly speaking, under law; it is a power which, as Kant said, *makes* laws. It carries us with free steps into a region in which we leave behind and forget the laws of nature; yet, as soon as we begin to look round us and to reflect on our new environment, we see that it could not have been otherwise. The world has not been turned upside down, but widened by the addition of a new province which is in perfect continuity with it.

But this feat of "widening nature without going beyond it," has its special subjective conditions. It cannot be achieved by one in whom the division of man's higher and lower nature has produced the sense of an irreconcilable breach between the two, or in whose eyes their unity has been reduced to a mere ideal. Poetic genius must live in fruition, not in aspiration—must be at peace and not at war with the world; it must be able to see good in

the heart of evil, it must grasp as attained what others see only as a distant hope. The poet cannot be one who has had to trample upon his natural life in order to make room for moral freedom, or one who has lost the vividness of the sensuous present in order to grasp at an idea. He must remain at one with himself as in happy childhood, and maintain an unbroken life in spite of all fightings within and contradictions without. For if he does not, a false note will get into his song; it will become a wail for a lost past, a complaint against time and fortune, or an aspiration after the unattainable, instead of an echo of the divine word that "all is good."

Art must, therefore, in a sense, be joyous;[1] if it is not to fall beneath its idea, it must at least return in its final note to joy. If it admits the tragic contrasts of life, it must not lose itself in them; it must carry us beyond "fear and terror," even if it has to carry us through them. It must not leave us victims of such passions without a reconciling atonement, which makes us accept the event, not merely as an inevitable fate, but as an issue in which the dramatic evolution of char-

[1] "Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst." (Schiller.)

acter has brought about *its own* destiny. Thus, even when it goes beyond the first and simplest theme of poetic imagination, and ceases to be an expression of man's joy in the response of nature to the demands of his spirit, it must restore the broken harmony by giving us, even in the utmost tragic catastrophe, the sense of the realisation of a law, in which we are more deeply interested than even in the sorrows and joys of the individual. If, on the contrary, a poem throws us back upon ourselves, jarred and untuned as by a consciousness of inexplicable accident or meaningless sorrow, or if it leaves us strained with a vacant longing for we know not what, we may safely say that we have been cheated by a false semblance of art, or at best by an art which wilfully seeks to destroy the sources of its own power. For contradiction, division, external limitation are the prose of life; and art is art, poetry is poetry, only as it disentangles, unites, and reconciles, giving us, if not the open vision, at least the presentiment or "Ahnung" of the unity which is beneath and beyond it.

In a sense, then, we may admit that poetic art is merely ideal. It must be ideal just because

it holds so closely to the *immediate* reality or sensuous presence of its objects, even while it lifts them beyond those limits and conditions which are attached to the things of sense. It cannot therefore, even in tragedy, go fairly down into the region of conflict and limitation, which, as I have said, is the domain of prose. It shrinks from the abstractions and divisions of science, as fatal to that immediate unity and life which it cannot surrender. Hence its "old quarrel" with philosophy. Philosophy is, *in the end*, at one with poetry. It might even be said that *ultimately* it is nothing more than an attempt to prove that which poetry assumes as given, or to enable us by reflection to recognise as the universal principle of reality that ideal which poetry exhibits to us in special creations. Yet the essential differences of method make it difficult for two such disparate activities to come to any understanding with each other. Plato, in whom the perfect union of these two forms of spiritual life was most nearly realised, is also the writer who most strongly insists on their essential opposition. In truth they may be said to start in opposite directions, and only to coincide in their final goal.

For philosophy, whatever ultimately it may do to point towards unity, is obliged to begin by carrying abstraction and division to a further extent than even science. If it aims at a final synthesis, it is on the basis of an unsparing analysis: if it seeks to find a living unity in the world, it is not by restoring the immediate life, which science destroys that it may dissect the dead body. Rather its business is to complete the scientific disintegration that, through death, it may reach a higher life. It is essential to philosophy to separate the spiritual from the natural the higher life from the lower life, the subject from the object, the universal from the particular, the ideal from the real. Thus it carries us deep into the region of abstraction and division, of contradiction and controversy; and if it also can be said to carry us beyond that region, yet in this respect its work is never complete, and the answer it gives in one age requires to be, if not essentially changed, yet deepened and widened and translated into a new language with the changing experiences of another age. Thus the element of pure theory must always be a dangerous, and may even be a fatal,

element to the poet; for it severs that which it is his peculiar function to keep united, and even where it reunites, it has to accomplish its synthesis in a region of thought in which the sensuous forms of poetry can hardly breathe and live.

These general considerations may serve as an introduction to a few remarks on Goethe's attitude towards philosophy and its influence on his intellectual development.

Goethe owed much to particular philosophers; we can often trace in his work indications of the study of Plato, and still more of Spinoza. Nor could he at any time withdraw himself from the influence of the great contemporaneous movement of idealistic thought, to which his own mental development moved in parallel lines, and on which it frequently reacted. But towards philosophy in general he preserved throughout his life a self-defensive attitude—a sort of armed neutrality. While he welcomed suggestions from it which were kindred with his own way of thinking, and even willingly appropriated many of its results, he always tried to keep his mind from being influenced by its methods and processes. He shrank

from it, at first by a kind of instinct, and afterwards with the distinct conviction, that any nearer approach would be dangerous to that intuitive insight of imagination in which his own strength lay.

Such reserve and self-limitation were very characteristic of Goethe; for, notwithstanding his many-sidedness, no one ever realised more distinctly the necessity of keeping within his own province. That each one must know himself in the sense of knowing his work, and must refuse to allow himself to be drawn away to interests and pursuits which lie beyond the range of his faculty, was for him the first maxim of self-culture. His obedience to it has often subjected him to serious moral charges, on the ground that his pursuit of self-culture involved a narrow self-absorption and a selfish indifference to the interests of his nation or of humanity. Such a view might appeal to expressions like the following in a letter to Lavater: "The passion to lift the pyramid of my being, the basis of which is assigned and established for me, as high as possible into the air, outweighs everything else, and permits me scarcely for one moment to forget it." But we

must interpret an exaggerated phrase like this by Goethe's often-expressed conviction that we necessarily become bunglers and meddlers, when we interfere with that which lies beyond the "orbit fixed for our existence by eternal laws." Activity that does not advance our own self-culture will, he holds, be useful to no other man. For him, as for Plato, all the virtues were summed up in each one doing his own business, and avoiding interference with the business of others.

On this principle we can, at least, partly explain what gave so much offence to the patriotism of his countrymen—his attitude during the war of liberation. In the *Awakening of Epimenides*, a poem which was written after the victory over Napoleon, and in which he expresses a kind of penitence for his silence during the national struggle, he suggests the excuse that the part he was called by his nature to play was, not to share in the war, but to prepare for the higher civilisation that should arise after the war was ended. Epimenides, who represents Goethe, is made to say: "I am ashamed of the hours of rest; it would have been a gain to suffer with you; for the pain you have borne makes you

greater than I." But the answer of the priest is: "Blame not the will of the Gods that thou hast gained many a year; they have kept thee in quietness so that thy feeling may be pure *(dass du rein empfinden kannst)*. And thus thou art in harmony with the future days to which history offers our pain and sorrow, our endeavour and our courage."

It was a similar feeling that made Goethe generally keep philosophy, as it were, at arm's length, while at the same time he recognised the points of contact which it offered to him. In a letter to Jacobi he says:—

"You can easily imagine my attitude to philosophy. When it lays itself out for division, I cannot get on with it; indeed I may say that it has occasionally done me harm by disturbing me in my natural course. But when it unites, or rather, when it confirms our original feeling as though we were one with Nature, and elevates it into a peaceful intuition that under its external *σύγκρισις* and *διάκρισις* a divine life is present to us, even if we are not permitted to lead such a life ourselves—then it is welcome to me, and you may reckon upon my sympathy."

From this we may explain the charm which he found in the one philosophical work from the influence of which he never tried to withdraw

himself—the *Ethics* of Spinoza. That strange book, in which the soul of poetry is clothed in the body of geometry, took hold of Goethe at an early period, so soon as he had begun to emerge out of the "storm and stress" of his youth; and through all his subsequent life he continued to refresh and strengthen himself with its doctrine of all embracing unity and disinterested love. The extreme antagonism of Spinoza's methods of thinking and expression to his own contributed to the attraction. He saw in Spinoza his intellectual complement, whom he could enjoy without being in any way tempted to go beyond himself.

"His all-reconciling peace contrasted with my all-agitating endeavour; his intellectual method was the opposite counterpart of my poetic way of feeling and expressing myself; and even the inflexible regularity of his logical procedure, which might be considered ill-adapted to moral subjects, made me his most passionate scholar and his devoted adherent. Mind and heart, understanding and sense, were drawn together with an inevitable elective affinity, and this at the same time produced an intimate union between individuals of the most different type."

Goethe never attempted to master the Spinozistic philosophy as a system; he tells us, indeed,

that he never even read the *Ethics* through at one time. But he kept reading *in* it, as people read in the Bible, to get strength and inspiration, and to confirm himself in those principles which gradually had become almost identified with his consciousness of himself. No other philosophy ever came so close to him: though his early association with Herder brought him indirectly under many philosophic influences, and in particular we often find him using the ideas and language of Leibniz.

To the Critical philosophy, in which the subject seemed to be set against the object and the ideal separated from the real, he at first felt an instinctive repulsion. But, at a later time, intercourse with Schiller, who professed himself a Kantian but who tried to soften Kant's sharp contrast between the moral and the natural, did something to remove his objections. And the *Critique of Judgment*, in which Kant himself undertakes the same task of mediation between freedom and nature, was a book almost entirely to his mind. He detected the way in which Kant, especially in this final development of his philosophy, points ("as by a side gesture")

beyond the limitations which he seems to fix for the intelligence of man, and with a curious turning of the tables, he claimed Kant's account of the "intuitive understanding" as a fit description of the true synthetic method for the discovery of nature's laws which he had himself followed.

On the other hand, he was repelled by the one-sided Idealism of Fichte, who exaggerated that aspect of the critical philosophy with which he was least in sympathy, and he seldom speaks of "the great Ego of Ossmanstadt" without a shade of irony. There is even a trace of malicious satisfaction in the way in which he relates how Fichte had his windows broken by the students of Jena: "not the most pleasant way of becoming convinced of the existence of a *non-ego.*" The further development of the ideas of the *Critique of Judgment,* by which Schelling brought Idealism, so to speak, into line with Spinozism, excited his eager interest, and he even speaks of the advance of philosophy as having helped him to reconcile himself to many things that had repelled him at an earlier time, and especially as having considerably changed his view of Christianity. Still, on the whole, except in the case of Spinoza,

his attitude to philosophy is that of an outsider who accepts its help when it seems to support his own way of thinking, but disregards it when it does not. And his ultimate view of it seems to be that indicated by the (somewhat ambiguous) aphorism, that "man is not born to solve the problem of the universe, but to find out wherein it consists."

What has just been said may be taken as a summary of Goethe's relations to philosophy. Such a summary, however, can tell us very little about Goethe, unless we are able to bring it into definite relation with the different stages of his intellectual history. In this article we can only attempt to indicate one or two turning-points in that history, and especially to show how it was that, at one of these turning-points, the philosophy of Spinoza gained so great a power over him, and how subsequently it combined itself with other influences to produce that distinctive cast of thought which we trace in his later works.

The first question we are naturally led to ask about an original genius like Goethe, who has done so much to change the main current of European thought, is as to his relation to the

past. Against what had he to revolt—from what had he to free himself, in order to open the way for the new life that was in him? And on the other side, with what already acting forces could he ally himself?

Born in the middle of the eighteenth century, he awakened to intellectual life between a lifeless orthodoxy and an external enlightenment, which was gradually undermining it, but at the same time reducing itself to a platitude. Looking beyond his own country to France, which had then all the prestige of culture, he found an artificial and aristocratic literature which repelled his youthful sympathies, and a scepticism which, stopping short in its development and allying itself with the rising mathematical and physical sciences, was on the way to produce a mechanical theory of the universe. He had soon got by heart the negative lesson of Voltaire, and, like Faust, he found that, while it freed him from all his superstitions, it at the same time made the world empty and barren to him. And the mechanical philosophy which presented itself in the *Système de la Nature*, as the positive substitute for his lost faith, could not but fill a poet's soul with

pious horror. In Goethe's autobiography, though written many years after, we can still discern the vehemence of his revolt against a theory which "reduced that which appears higher than nature, or rather as the higher nature in nature itself, to aimless and formless matter and motion."

"It appeared to us," he declared, "so grey, so Cimmerian, and so dead that we shuddered at it as at a ghost. We thought it the very quintessence of old age. All was said to be necessary, and therefore, no God. Why, we asked, should not a necessity for God find its place among other necessities? We confessed, indeed, that we could not withdraw ourselves from the necessary influences of day and night, of the seasons, of the climatic changes, of physical and animal conditions; yet we felt something within us that appeared arbitrarily to assert itself against all these; and again something which sought to counterpoise such arbitrariness and to restore the equilibrium of life."

On the other hand, the ordinary teleological theology, with its external world-architect and externally determined designs, could not seem to Goethe any more satisfactory than the mechanical philosophy. It had, indeed, the same fault as that philosophy; for it too substituted an external composition of parts for life and development. He had put such theology away from him almost in his boyhood, and he could not

return to it. Then as always, he was ready to shoot Voltairian shafts of wit at a doctrine of final causes, which turned any accidental result of the existence of an object into its end.

In this state of mind, the fiery appeals of Rousseau to *nature*, as a power within man which is self-justified against every constraint forced upon him from without, could not but produce the greatest effect on Goethe. All his discontent with an unproductive orthodoxy, and all his distaste for a disintegrating scepticism, combined to make him accept a creed which promised freedom to all the forces of his being. Rousseau seemed to vindicate the claims of everything that had life, and to war only with the dead; and a susceptible poetic nature, doubting of itself, was only too willing to be re-assured by him as to the rightness of its own impulses. The vagueness of this gospel of nature was for a time hidden from Goethe by the very intensity of the poetic impulse within him, which responded vividly to every impression from without. "See, my friend," he writes in an early letter, "what is the beginning and end of all my writing, but the reproduction of the world around me by an inward

cosmic principle which seizes upon everything, binds it together, new creates it, kneads it, and sets it out again in its own form and manner." The rush of youthful inspiration seemed to need no guide; and it spent its force, in every direction from which excitement came, with what Goethe afterwards called "a divine wantonness." The calm pages of the *Dichtung und Wahrheit* preserve only a feeble image of the fervour and passion which is shown in the letters and poems of this time of "storm and stress." From some of the worst dangers of such a time, Goethe was saved by the genuineness of his poetic impulse. But such a living at random, with all sails set and no hand on the helm, could not long be possible even to genius. In his case it resulted in a crisis of sensibility, the image of which is preserved for us in the *Sorrows of Werther*, a work in which he gave a final expression to the passions and illusions of his youth, and so, once for all, freed himself from them.

"Nature" is the obvious rallying cry of a new generation striving to free itself from the weight of the ideas and institutions of an earlier time.

Such a cry may often be the expression of a very artificial and sophistical state of mind, which, beginning in the desire to throw off that which is really oppressive, ends in a fretful revolt against the most necessary conditions of human life. The vague impulse of youth which refuses to limit itself or give up its "natural right to all things," the vain demand of the heart to find an outward world which corresponds to its wants, the rebellion of passion against the destiny which refuses it an immediate satisfaction, the hatred of the untamed spirit for everything of the nature of convention and rule—each and all of these feelings readily disguise themselves under the name of a desire to *return to nature.*

But in truth such a longing can least of all be satisfied with the simple rustic and domestic life which it seems to admire. When it cries out—"*O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint!*" —it forgets that knowledge would be fatal to such bliss. The self-absorbed, self-conscious spirit, preying upon itself in its isolating individualism, is least of all capable of that simple union with others for which it pines, of that contentment with natural pleasures which it loves to express.

Rude nature would terrify it most of all, if it could once fairly come in contact with her. The discontent of the sentimentalist with the world is merely a way of expressing what is really the inner self-contradiction of his own state. The exaggerated image of self stands between him and the world, and gives rise to an infinite craving which spurns every finite satisfaction. His joy is, in the language of Goethe, a fruit which is "corrupted ere it is broken from the tree."

This strange emotional disease, which has so long vexed the modern world, has had its literary representatives in most European nations, and has been expressed by them with many national and individual modifications. From Rousseau, whose whole individuality was absorbed by it, it received its first and most complete literary embodiment. In this country, Byron combined it with the fervour of an active temperament, and draped it in a somewhat theatrical costume. Goethe, in his *Werther*, gave to it a purer rendering, combining it with the domestic sentiment and reflective self-analysis of his nation.

But, while Rousseau and even Byron were permanent victims of the self-contradictory state

of feeling which they expressed, Goethe, in his *Werther*, found a true æsthetic deliverance from it. He cured himself, so to speak, by painting his disease. He exorcised the spectre that barred his way to a higher life by forcing it to stand to be painted. *Werther* was his demonstration to himself of the emptiness and unworthiness of a state of mind, whose only legitimate end was suicide. This, indeed, was not understood at the time. Goethe was haunted through life by the "*viel-beweinter Schatten*"—by a constant demand for sympathy from those whose malady he had so perfectly described, and who expected to find in him a fellow-sufferer. But for him, the writing of the book was the beginning of recovery. In his autobiography, he complains of those who sought a direct moral lesson in a work of art, and who imagined that *Werther* was intended to justify the sentimentality and the suicide of the hero. For himself, however, it had a lesson, the reverse of that which lies on the surface of it—the lesson that rebellion against the conditions of human life is not only futile, but irrational. In these limiting conditions, he is never weary of preaching, lies the way to freedom. "From

the law that binds all men, he only can be freed who overcomes himself." How far this lesson was revealed to Goethe in the mere rebound from Wertherism, and how far he owed it to any external teaching, we cannot now disentangle. It is sufficient to say that he seemed to himself to find it in the pages of Spinoza. Goethe's "apprenticeship," to use his own metaphor, was ended, when Spinoza took in his inner life that place which had hitherto been filled by Rousseau. The passage in the *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in which this is expressed is familiar, but it is necessary to quote it here once more :—

"Our physical as well as our social life, morality, custom, knowledge of the world, philosophy, religion—yea, many an accidental occurrence—all tell us that we must *renounce*. So much is there that belongs to our inmost being, which we cannot develop and form outwardly ; so much that we need from without for the completion of our being is withdrawn from us : and, again, so much is forced on us which is both alien and burdensome. We are deprived of that which is toilsomely won, of that which is granted by kindly powers, and ere we can see the meaning of it, we find ourselves compelled to give up our personality, first by fragments, and then completely. In such cases it is usual to pay no attention to any one who makes faces at the sacrifice exacted of him ; rather, the bitterer the cup, the sweeter must

be one's bearing, in order that the unconcerned spectator may not be annoyed by a grimace.

"To solve this hard problem, nature has furnished man with a rich provision of force, activity, and toughness. But what most often comes to his help is his unconquerable levity. By this he becomes capable of renouncing particular things at each moment, if he can only grasp at something new in the next. Thus unconsciously we are constantly renewing our whole lives. We put one passion in place of another; business, inclinations, amusements, hobbies, we prove them all one after another, only to cry out that 'all is vanity.' No one is shocked at this false, nay, blasphemous, speech; nay, every one thinks that in uttering it he has said something wise and unanswerable. Few, indeed, are those who are strong enough to anticipate such unbearable feelings, and in order to escape from all partial renunciations, to perform one all-embracing act of renunciation. These are the men who convince themselves of the existence of the eternal, of the necessary, of the universal, and who seek to form conceptions which cannot fail them, yea, which are not disturbed, but rather confirmed, by the contemplation of that which passes away. But as there is something superhuman in this attitude of mind, such persons are commonly held to be inhuman, without God and aliens to the world, and it is much if men refrain from decorating them with horns and claws."

"Renunciation once for all in view of the Eternal." It was this lesson that made Goethe feel an "atmosphere of peace breathe upon him," whenever he opened his Spinoza. Much may be said in some respects against Goethe's moral

attitude, but there is one point in which it is scarcely possible to praise it too much. No one ever acted more faithfully on the resolve to make the best of circumstances, and to put behind him with resolute cheerfulness the "blasphemous speech that all is vanity."

It is easy in one way to make too much of one's own life, but it is not easy to make enough of it in Goethe's sense of living in the present, and drawing all the good out of it. Where men do not live from hand to mouth, nor are the victims of one narrow interest, their self-occupation is often a dreaming about the past and the future, which isolates them from other men and from the world. "They are always losing to-day, because there has been a yesterday, and because to-morrow is coming." "They little suspect what an inaccessible stronghold *that* man possesses, who is always in earnest with himself and with the things around him." To be "always in earnest" with little things as well as great, with the minutest facts presented to his observation as with the most important issues of life, to throw the whole force of his being into a court masque, (when that was the requirement of the hour), as into a

great poem or a scientific discovery; to be, in short, always intent upon the "nearest duty," was Goethe's practical philosophy.

With this was combined a resolute abstinence from complaint, or even from thought about what was not granted to him by nature and fortune, and an eager and thankful acceptance of what was so granted. In one way, this "old heathen," as he calls himself, is genuinely pious; he is always acknowledging his advantages and opportunities, and almost never speaking of hindrances; and he seems constantly to bear with him a simple-hearted confidence in the goodness and justice of the Power, which has brought him just what it has brought, and refused just what it has refused. He belongs to the order of which he speaks in the second part of *Wilhelm Meister*, the order of those who "cheerfully renounce" whatever is not granted to them, and who come back through a kind of Stoicism to an Optimism which moves on a higher level. With this was connected an ungrudging recognition of the excellences of others, and an unenvious readiness to further every one in his own way. It was this pliant strength,

and the faith on which it rests, that alone could have attracted to Goethe the admiration and almost worship of a man like Carlyle, who, in all superficial interests, was at the opposite pole of thought and temperament.

Goethe's "storm and stress" period—the period of "unconditioned effort to break through all limitations," as he calls it—was ended with *Werther*, and with it began a movement towards limit and measure, which culminated at the period of his Italian journey. If in this new phase of thought nature was still worshipped, it was no longer regarded as a power that reveals itself at once in the immediate appearances of the outward world, or the immediate impulses of the human spirit. It was now the *natura naturans* of Spinoza—*i.e.*, as Goethe conceived it, a plastic organizing force which works secretly in the outward and especially in the organic world, and which in human life reveals itself most fully as the ideal principle of art. Clinging, as an artist, to the external, Goethe now sees that the truth of nature does not lie immediately on the surface, but in a unity which can be grasped only by a penetrative

insight. Demanding, as a poet, that the ideal should not be separated from the sensuous, he is now conscious that the poetic truth of the passions shows itself, not in their immediate expression, but only when their conflict leads to their "purification," and so reveals a higher principle.

Hence, though, even more decidedly than at an earlier time, he rejects the Christian faith, which he regards as breaking the sacred bond of nature and Spirit, and setting the one against the other, it is an idealized materialism which he opposes to it. What he fears and abhors in religion and in philosophy is the idea of "a godless nature and an unnatural God,"[1] a mechanical world-order and an external world-architect or world-governor who "lets the world swing round his finger." "It befits Him to move the world from within, to cherish nature in Himself, and Himself in nature, so that what lives and moves and is in Him never forgets His force or His spirit." He is filled with the thought of a Power which manifests itself in the facts of nature, though only to an eye which can pene-

[1] Schelling.

trate through the apparent chaos to the point where it may be seen as a cosmos. The great modern ideas of organism and development have taken hold upon him, and he regards the artistic faculty as simply the highest expression of the shaping principle which works underground in nature. His fundamental ideas might be summed up in the pregnant words of Shakespeare—

> "Nature is made better by no mean,
> But nature makes that mean: so o'er the art,
> Which you say adds to nature, is an art
> That nature makes."

He had come, he tells us, "to regard his own indwelling poetic power as simply and entirely nature," and as with him "every idea rapidly changed itself into an image," he sought to express his religious attitude by a new rendering of the old myth of Prometheus. He too, like Prometheus, had a consciousness of "the god within him" which made him independent of the gods above; for his poetic faculty seemed to him something higher than his individual will and impulses —something that might claim kindred with the productive force of nature itself.

Such a view of things we may call in a special

sense Hellenic, since it was in ancient Greece that the higher spiritual interests of man seemed most directly to connect themselves with the gifts of nature. The Greeks were led by an almost unconscious impulse to idealise the natural without ever breaking with it or opposing the spiritual to it. Thus they showed themselves artists not only in art, but in life, and escaped the painful division of the modern mind.

"The modern," writes Goethe, "can scarcely bend his thoughts upon any object without throwing himself into the infinite, in order finally, if things go well with him, to return to a limited point; but the ancients, without traversing any such circuitous path, felt all their individual requirements satisfied within the limits of the beautiful world. Wherefore are their poets and historians the wonder of those who understand, the despair of those who would imitate them, but because the *dramatis personæ* whom they had to set on the stage took so deep an interest in their own immediate selves, in the narrow sphere of their Fatherland, in the course of their own lives and that of their fellow citizens—because, in short, with all their heart and soul they threw themselves upon the present? Hence it could not be difficult for writers who were filled with a kindred spirit to make such a present eternal. What actually happened had for them that magic value, which we are scarcely able to attach to anything but that which is thought and felt. They clung so closely to what is nearest, what is truest and most real, that even their fancy pictures have

bone and marrow. Man and what is human were most highly prized, and all man's inward and outward relations to the world were exhibited as powerfully as they were apprehended. For not yet were thought and feeling dismembered by abstraction; not yet had that scarcely remediable division been produced in the sound nature of man."[1]

These words bear the impress of the change by which Goethe passed from what is usually called the romantic to the classic school of art. From his earliest years indeed he had felt the charm of Greek art and poetry; but the productions of his youth were animated by another spirit. *Götz von Berlichingen*, his first important dramatic work, was one of the earliest expressions of that passion for mediæval ideals which afterwards went so far in Germany and other countries; and his first essay on art was an enthusiastic tribute to the glories of Strasburg Cathedral. Most of the poetic works attempted or sketched out in this period, such as *The Wandering Jew* and the first outline of *Faust*, show the same bent of mind; and in *Werther* the endless lament of modern sentimentalism over the separation of the real from the ideal reached its *ne plus ultra* of expression. But with this work Goethe, as we have seen, made a

[1] Goethe's *Essay on Winckelmann.*

return upon himself, and almost violently rejected from him the ideas and methods of romanticism. He became the sworn enemy of all formless and chaotic productions, and insisted with growing emphasis upon the necessity of form and measure. It is a superficial indication of this that he began to versify his dramatic works, even those that had at first been composed in prose, and in many cases to select classic subjects and use classic metres.

The same change showed itself in other contemporaneous writers, as, for example, in Schiller, whose *Götter Griechenlands* is an expression of that admiration for the repose and harmony of the antique, which was awakened in him in the reaction against the untamed violence of *The Robbers*. But it is characteristic that while Schiller expresses this feeling as a longing for something unattainable—something that has once for all been taken from men by the progress of human thought and can never be perfectly recovered—Goethe has no such word of despair. For him the ideal is there before us in nature for our eyes to see, if they can only look deep enough, and now, as in Greece, it is working in the poet's mind, and reproducing itself in art. His dawning friendship with Schiller

was disturbed when the latter began to insist upon the Kantian doctrine, that no experience can ever be adequate to an idea. Goethe reflected, however, that if Schiller held that to be an idea which he expressed as experience, there must be some mediating link between them. "I told him that I was glad to think that I had ideas without knowing it, and that I could even see them with my eyes."

This last expression has immediate reference to Goethe's scientific views, especially in relation to the Metamorphosis of Plants. This, like all his contributions to biology, was inspired by the idea that there is a unity of principle in all life, and that it develops toward diversity by continuous modification of a single form. This idea led him to regard all plants as variations on a single type, and all the parts of each plant as correlative modifications of one simple form by which it has been adapted to various functions. The same principle guided him to the discovery of the traces in man of the intermaxillary bone, the absence of which had been supposed to distinguish the structure of man from that of the apes, and also made him one of the first to maintain that all parts of the

skull are modified vertebræ. Thus, in spite of his being in a technical sense an amateur in science, Goethe grasped the idea of development, and used it to throw light upon the animal kingdom, when as yet few or none of the professed biologists had reached such a point of view.

Nor did he regard these biological studies as a something distinct from his poetic work. On the contrary, he conceived them to be a necessary complement or continuation of that work, and he complained of the imperfect insight of some of his friends, who thought that he was wasting time upon scientific studies that might have been better spent in poetic creation, and who did not detect how this interest "sprang out of his inmost being."[1] And when an eminent naturalist complimented him on his "objective thinking"—*i.e.*, on his power of giving himself up to the sensuous impressions of objects in such a way as to extract their secret—he did not hesitate to claim for himself in the same sense the power of being objective in poetry (*Gegenständliche Dichtung*):—

"Certain great motives, legends, ancient traditions so deeply impressed themselves upon my mind, that I kept

[1] *Campaign in France*, November, 1792.

them living and active within me for thirty or forty years. To me it appeared the most beautiful of possessions to see such worthy images renewed in my imagination, in which they were, indeed, continually transformed, yet without being altered, till at last they were raised to a purer form and a more definite expression."

These words well express the manner of Goethe's poetic production. It was not his way, as it was the way of Schiller, to concentrate his thoughts upon a subject, and force his genius into action. Rather he watched the creations as they grew within him, and used his conscious intelligence only to defend the work from all incongruous elements.

Such "objective poetry" cannot be an easy matter even for the greatest of poets. As it takes much metaphysic to keep free from metaphysic, so it requires no little critical and reflective power in the poet to purge out the dross of prose from his work, and especially to free its pure intuitive unity from the artifice and mechanism of reflection. Above all it requires a certain stubborn faith in the "whispers of the lonely muse when the whole world seems adverse," a resolute maintenance of the consciousness of poetic harmony in the face of all the discords

of life, which is hard for the poet, just in proportion as the very condition of his existence is his susceptibility to impression. And for the modern poet this is harder than for the ancient, because the movement of history has brought with it new problems and causes of division. The greater the conflict of man's nature with itself and with circumstances, the more difficult has become the artist's task of making music out of the jarring forces in and around him, and preventing their confusion and conflict from mingling with his song.

In a passage already quoted, as in many others, Goethe expresses his sense of the effort which the modern requires to make in order to place and keep himself at a point of view which the Greek took up almost by instinct. And it is indeed this effort itself, and the consciousness of it, which prevents Goethe from ever being wholly Greek. Even in those of his works that are most filled with the spirit of antiquity, he is obliged to pay this tribute to the time. He is not a Greek, because, in order to reach the "peace and purity of the antique," he has to conquer an antagonism which for the Greek did not exist.

This feeling is expressed half-humorously in his account of a conversation with Schiller, who regarded the Fall as a desirable event, because only by it could man rise above his animal innocence; while Goethe maintained that such a break in the continuity of development was a disaster. In the same spirit he sometimes spoke of the Reformation as a violent crisis which delayed the progress of civilization, and condemned the Revolutionary struggle of his own day as a disturbance to peaceful culture. "I hate all violent overturns, because in them men lose as much as they gain. All that is violent and precipitate displeases me, because it is not conformable to nature. In politics, as in nature, the true method is to wait." Struggle, warfare, revolution is to him the negative and the barren; and even patriotism, with its exaltation of one nation at the expense of another, is a doubtful virtue. "How could I take up arms without hate?" he cries. "National hate is a particular hate; it is in a lower region that it is most energetic and ardent; but there is a height at which it vanishes, when one is, so to speak, above nationalities, and one feels the happiness

and misery of a neighbouring people as his own."

This idea of all negation, controversy, and conflict as something essentially evil is embodied in his wonderful creation of Mephistopheles, the disintegrating spirit who is continually warring against life and energy, but who is tolerated by the divine power, because man is so fond of "unconditioned peace," and requires to be fretted and provoked into activity. Even so much toleration as this, however, is for God and not for man, who is called to "hate the devil and him only," to withdraw himself from all that is negative, violent, and destructive, and to devote all his life to that which is positive and productive, and who thus only can hope for a final deliverance from the base companion who is allowed in this world to haunt him.

"Gerettet ist das edle Glied
Der Geisterwelt vom Bösen :
Wer immer strebend sich bemüht
Den können wir erlösen."

It is here, perhaps, that we find the limitations of the genius of Goethe, limitations which were closely connected with the sources of his strength.

As to the artist the immediate sensuous form of reality is indispensable, so Goethe was jealous of any influence that tends to mar or destroy it. Division, pain, and evil appeared to him too great a price to pay even for the highest good, and, in the spirit of his master Spinoza, he was inclined to deny that such a price was necessary. He demanded that the highest should be attained without a breach with nature, and merely by continuing her work upon a higher platform. Hence he was repelled from history, as he was repelled from politics, by the violence of the struggles, the depth of the divisions, and the greatness of the sacrifices with which the progress of man is purchased. Hence also he could not accept the Christian idea of life.

It is true, as we have seen, that he was inspired with the great moral idea of renunciation, but his interpretation of it is somewhat different from the Christian interpretation. He does not exactly bid us die to self that we may live; he bids us renounce all that nature and fortune refuse us, in the confidence that if we keep working on to the end "nature will be obliged to give us another form of existence when that

which we have can no longer contain our spirit." The difference may seem almost verbal, and it is easy to see that by a slight change of tone the one lesson may be made to pass into the other. Nay, we may even say that such a change of tone is perceptible in some of the later works of Goethe himself. But in the first instance, the variation of expression concealed a real difference of spirit. It showed that Goethe feared and shrank from what has been called "the earnestness, the pain, the patience and the labour of the negative," through which the Christian spirit reaches a higher affirmative; that he could not reconcile himself to a war with nature even as the way to a higher reconciliation.

This difference between the Goethean and the Christian idea of life showed itself in the most marked way in Goethe after his Italian journey. At that time he was so imbued with the naturalistic spirit of antiquity that he regarded the productions of mediæval art as for the most part monstrosities, or at least as eccentricities that were not to be copied. He even felt and occasionally expressed a violent repulsion towards the symbols of Christian worship

and took pleasure in proclaiming himself a "heathen."

At a later period the bitterness of this antagonism disappeared. As his exclusive Hellenism was gradually modified by advancing years he became ready to admit the value and even the supreme moral importance of Christian ideas. "It is altogether strange to me," he writes to Jacobi, in reference to the dramatist Werner, "that I, an old heathen, should see the Cross planted in my own ground, and hear Christ's blood and wounds poetically preached, without its offending me. We owe this to the higher point of view to which philosophy has raised us." His "truly Julian hate to Christianity and so-called Christians," he declared on one occasion, with a touch of humour, had softened itself with years, so that little was wanting to make him say with the Ethiopian eunuch in the Acts, "What doth hinder me to be baptized!" And in the *Wanderjahre,* he makes a broad distinction between the "ethnic religions" and the religion which teaches "reverence for that which is beneath us," recognizing in the latter the highest of all religions. He adds, however, that it must not be understood

to exclude the other two religions—the religion of reverence for that which is above us, and the religion of reverence for equals. The overseer of his ideal educational institution, when asked which religion he accepts, has to answer: "Alle drei" —each and all of the three religions that have divided man's allegiance in the past.

In truth Goethe's quarrel with Christianity was due to two causes which were at first closely connected, but which are capable of being separated. In the first place, as has been suggested above, it was due to his viewing Christianity as a religion of the other world, a religion whose God was not the principle of all life in nature and man, but an external creator and governor. In the second place, it was due to the prominence of the ascetic or negative element in Christianity, and to the divorce of the natural and spiritual which is connected therewith.

Now the first of these objections rested on a mental characteristic which Goethe could scarcely have surrendered without ceasing to be Goethe, the born enemy of all that is transcendent, all that carries us into a region beyond the possibility of human experience. It was the vocation

of Goethe's life to teach that what in this sense cannot be brought within our reach, is as good as nothing for us. His objection to Christianity on this ground, therefore, could be removed only in so far as he was led by the philosophical movement of his time to attach greater importance to the Christian idea of the unity of the divine and the human, and to regard the purely supernatural element as an accident.

On the other hand, Goethe's objection to Christianity as a negative and ascetic religion became greatly modified when, in later years, the Greek conception of life ceased to be all-sufficient for him. Ultimately, as we have seen, he came to admit the necessity of a religion of reverence for that which is beneath us—a religion which could see the divine even in that which in its immediate aspect is "repulsive, hateful, and evil." But that which is "repulsive, hateful, and evil" cannot by any gradual transition be elevated and refined to goodness. If the divine is to be revealed in it, it can only be by the negation of that which at first it seems to be. The Christian idea of self-realisation through self-sacrifice is the necessary outcome of the religion of reverence for that

which is beneath us. Hence we do not wonder to find Goethe in the same connection treating the *Sanctuary of Sorrow*, in which the sufferings and death of Christ are represented, as the innermost sanctuary of religion. Into this sanctuary, however, he avoids taking us. He is, one might say, theoretically reconciled with Christianity, but something still repels him from it. He waits, to use the imagery of his *Märchen*, till the narrow fisherman's hut shall become the altar in a new temple of humanity. The form in which Christianity is commonly presented as a religion of supernaturalism and other-worldliness continues to keep him alienated from that which in its moral essence he recognises as the highest.

Perhaps we may best sum up what has to be said of Goethe by calling him the most modern of the moderns, the high priest of a culture which, in its opposition to mediævalism, is carried back towards the literature of the Greeks, "the most human and humane of literatures, the literature of those who were most at home in the world." It was characteristic of the mediæval mind to seek for that which is highest in that which is furthest removed from man, that which can least be brought

within the range of human experience. The divine power on which it depended for the elevation of man, was conceived as acting upon him from without, as upon a lifeless and inert material. The asceticism, the supernaturalism, the divided life of the Middle Ages, were only the natural result of such conceptions.

On the other hand, the whole movement of civilisation from the time of the revival of learning has been a war against such ways of thinking. The modern spirit, like the spirit of antiquity, is obliged, by its most essential intellectual instincts, to cling to that which is present, to that which is immediately evidenced to us in inner and outer experience. It holds to fact and reality against that which is merely ideal, and it can recognise the ideal only when it presents itself as the deeper fact.

In all this the modern spirit withdraws itself from the Middle Ages, and claims kindred with antiquity. Yet it is impossible any longer to regard the modern movement of thought as merely a return to the light of ancient culture out of the *Dark Ages*. The long mediæval struggle of humanity for deliverance from itself cannot be re-

garded as simply a contest with spectres of its own raising, but must be taken as an essential stage in the progress of human thought. If the endeavour to crush nature under the dominion of spirit was in a sense irrational and fruitless, seeing that it is only *in* nature that spirit can be revealed, yet that endeavour has for ever made impossible the easy reconciliation of the two with which the ancients were satisfied. A mere return to antiquity must produce, as it always has produced, a culture which falls below that of antiquity both in fulness and depth. For the ancient civilisation was not impoverished, as such a revival of it must be, by ignoring problems which had not yet been opened up. As Goethe found his idea of Iphigenia most fully realised in a Christian saint,[1] so we may say that the perfect form of Greek art cannot be again reproduced except by a spirit which has passed through the Christian *Sanctuary of Sorrow.*

On the other hand, if the moderns can return to the ideals of the Middle Ages, it is on a higher level, at which such ideals no longer come into conflict with the naturalistic spirit of antiquity.

[1] *Italienische Reise*, Oct. 19, 1786.

In like manner the secular scientific impulse, which, in the last century, was working towards an altogether mechanical and external explanation of the world, begins, with Goethe himself, to bring back in a higher sense, under the names of organism and development, that explanation of the world by final causes, which in a lower sense it has rejected. And the vain attempts still made to explain spirit by nature are rapidly teaching us to revive the truth which underlay the mediæval supernaturalism, that in the last resort nature is only to be explained by spirit. Perhaps it may be found that no one has done more to prepare the way for such a reunion of ancient and mediæval ideas than our great modern poet and prophet of the religion of nature, Goethe.

ROUSSEAU.

ROUSSEAU is one of those authors whom we can never afford wholly to forget. His value indeed does not consist in any consummate literary achievement: for he is too much of a prophet to be ever completely successful as an artist. That persistent reiteration of certain ideas, that perpetual insistance upon certain modes of feeling, which was the condition of his power over his own generation, makes him often tedious, and sometimes, it must be confessed, even nauseous to readers of the present time, in spite of the point and dignity and riches of his utterance. Just because he spoke to such willing and attentive ears in his own time, ours are now shut against him. Like his Julia, we have "drunk the sweet and bitter cup of sensibility to the lees," and the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, with its fruitless self-analysing ecstasy of feeling, can no longer tempt

us. If the reign of Puritanism has all but taken all meaning and reality out of the Scriptural language of the Protestant Reformers, it is not wonderful that Robespierre and St. Just with their many followers have made the cant of abstract patriotism and natural right intolerable to us. And the sentimental Deism of the Savoyard vicar has long been recognised both by believers and unbelievers to have too little substance, too little definiteness and concrete meaning, to make a religion. In art and politics, in philosophy and theology, we have outgrown, at least we have ceased to relish, the abstract Gospel of subjective feeling and individual right, and we can no longer revive in its original intensity the charm which it had for those to whom it was first addressed.

Yet without a study of Rousseau and his contemporaries, it is impossible for us to understand ourselves, or the great change which has taken place in human thought within the last century. Rousseau is the "short abstract and chronicle of his time." The tragedy of revolution, which was necessary to the new birth of European civilisation, was enacted in his breast ere it passed on to the stage of history. In his *Confessions*, and many vindications of himself,

with their mad self-exaltation and self-exposure, their deification of the individual Ego, which is yet at the same time shown in all its naked meanness and littleness, we have the diseased spirit of the time gathered to a focus of intensity in which all its contradiction is clearly displayed. The infinite ambition combined with the sordid reality of Rousseau's life, his confident and yet impotent aspiration after better forms of social union, both in the family and the state, combined with his utter incapacity for establishing healthy relations with one single human being, his constant reiteration of good wishes and intentions, and his persistent claim that the will should be taken for the deed, combined with the ever-reviving consciousness that the will is not the deed, and the desire to thrust upon society the responsibility of his own failure—all this forms a picture of complicated mental agony which we can scarcely bear to contemplate, except as a phase of the *Welt-Schmerz*, which is the condition of progress. The easy external interpretation has often been given that Rousseau was maddened with vanity, and that even his flight from the world was an effort to attract its notice. But, as Mr. Morley says in his admirable biography, Rousseau's vanity, if it

can be so called, "belonged to another sphere of motive" than any ordinary affectation of singularity.

The truth is, that he was so intensely occupied with the endless struggle with himself, the endless effort to find anodynes for his own self-dissatisfaction, that he could not possibly have cherished that care for the opinion of others, that common kind of vanity, which characterised so many of the literary men of his time. Rousseau lived in a world of his own phantasy, and in his later days at least, the world without was to him little more than an impersonal Greek chorus to the intense drama that was being enacted within his own soul. He had, indeed, a diseased desire to reveal himself, a diseased craving for the confirmation by others of his own judgment of himself; and failing of this confirmation, he turned bitterly away from the world as his enemy. But for the world's opinion in itself he had no such respect as would induce him either to hide anything from it, or to put anything but what he believed to be truth before it. Those who opposed, even those who interfered with him in any way, he seemed to identify with the accusing voices within him which he sought

to silence. Thus suspicion grew to bitterness, and bitterness to isolation and madness, till, in his last work,—which, in spite of its monomania, is one of the most perfect expressions of a kind of melancholy peace found in the heart of despair itself,—he declares that not only the literary and ecclesiastical cliques with which he has quarrelled, not only the whole present, but all future generations, are and will be in a conspiracy to blacken his name and memory. The *Reveries* are the egoism of a broken heart, which even in breaking will not give up its egoism. But they are only the natural culmination of that "custom of nourishing himself on his own substance, and seeking all his pasture within himself," which was the bane of his whole life.

Rousseau was a son of the Swiss Republic of Geneva, and he remained long enough in his native city to receive an indelible impression from its religious and political traditions. Set to learn the business of engraving with a hard taskmaster, at the age of sixteen he escaped into Savoy, and to secure a welcome he became, or pretended to become, a convert to the Church of Rome. But his later works show that the practices of Catholic

devotion never took any real hold of him, and that religion never was to him anything but a relation of the individual soul to God. In like manner, when at a later period he tried to formulate his conception of politics, he found it impossible to conceive liberty existing as under any more complex constitution than that of a Municipal State like Geneva.

More important, however, among the influences of Rousseau's youth than even Calvinistic religion and republican politics, was that unhealthy stimulation of sensuous and imaginative feeling which began in his earliest years, and finally reached a degree of passionate intensity beyond the limit of sanity. At the age of six he was already an eager reader of romances, and had learnt to waste himself in the luxury of passive emotion; and the wandering, unsettled life on which he entered after his flight from Geneva, interrupted though it was by vehement but unmethodical fits of study in different directions, chiefly in music and literature, did nothing to restore the balance of his mind.

Gradually he developed a temper so made up of sensitiveness and impulsiveness, that it is

scarcely possible to conceive a condition of life in which it could have preserved harmony with circumstances and with itself. "He has only *felt* during the whole course of his life," wrote Hume, after some intercourse with him, "and in this respect his sensibility rises to a pitch beyond what I have seen any example of: but it still gives him a more acute feeling of pain than of pleasure. He is like a man who was stripped not only of his clothes, but of his skin, and turned out in that situation to combat with the rude and boisterous elements."[1] And Rousseau's analysis of his own "effeminate but indomitable character" is very much to the same effect:—"In everything," he says, "gêne and subjection are insupportable to me, they would make me hate pleasure itself."[2] "In order to do good with pleasure, it is necessary for me to act freely, without restraint; and to take away all the sweetness of a good work from me, it is only necessary that it should become my duty." "Be it man or duty or even necessity that lays a command upon me, when my heart is silent, my will remains deaf, and I cannot obey; I see an evil threatening me, but I let it

[1] Morley's *Rousseau*, ii. 299. [2] *Confessions*, i. 5.

come rather than agitate myself to prevent it. In every imaginable thing, what I cannot do with pleasure, it is impossible for me to do at all."[1]

To such a disposition the relations of society must be a constant irritation, because in its impulsive self-abandonment it is ever creating for itself obligations the weight of which it is unable to sustain, and also because it cannot understand any middle term between complete union and hostility. We do not therefore wonder to hear Rousseau saying, "I have never been fitted for civil society where all is gêne, obligation, and duty. My independent temper makes me incapable of the subjections necessary to him who would live with men."

The only social relation Rousseau could understand was that intimate communion of simple cares and pleasures, that continual easy expansion of heart, which can be found only in a narrow domestic circle, secured from the intrusion of all except those who are everything to each other. This Rousseau enjoyed, or thought he enjoyed, for a short time in his youth in the household of

[1] *Reveries*, vi.

Madame de Warens, and his after-life was a continual regret and longing for the lost Paradise. "Le vide," he once said, "de l'âge mûr, qui s'est fait sentir à moi, me retrace le doux temps du premier âge." The idea of a simple rustic life of domestic peace, remote from all the noises of the world, returns again and again in his works, and is the source of their most beautiful passages. Connected with it is that love of the country, that perfect delight in natural beauty, which made his words a kind of revelation to a nation whose cultivated classes had fled from the country and were rapidly turning it into a desert. The pressure of circumstances, however, and Rousseau's own temper, soon put an end to the *Idyll of Les Charmettes*, and he was drawn by the necessity of his vocation to Paris, the great centre of the intellectual life of the time.

Paris was to Rousseau an atmosphere of almost fatal stimulation. It completed his literary education, and made him conscious of his powers. At the same time, it threw him back upon himself with a violent repulsion from all that he heard and saw around him. A poor man, he had learned the depth of the joys that are open to the poor,

and the temptations of a luxurious and artificial life came too late even to touch him. Accustomed to the simple and unrestrained life of the country, he was never at his ease in the brilliant and dissipated society in which he found himself. Rousseau could understand, in a measure, the ideal life with all its renunciations; he could understand fully the simple delights of the senses and the affections. But the bright encounter of wit, the charm of social elegance, were to him as good as nothing; and the literary and philosophic life of the time was worse than nothing. Both his lower and his higher nature made him long for a kind of plain living and high thinking, which was not to be found in the Paris of the eighteenth century. Above all, the sceptical temper of a society which was then sitting at the feet of Voltaire repelled and disgusted him. "I hate," he once said, "this rage to destroy without building up."[1]

It was the revolt of Rousseau's whole soul against the life and culture of Paris that gave such force and intensity to his denunciation of the evils of an artificial civilisation, and to his

[1] *Mémoires de Mme. d'Epinay*, ii. 66.

prophetic call to a perverse generation to return to nature. Forced back upon himself, he sought in his visions a compensation for his practical incapacity either to conform himself to the world, or the world to himself, and "while he was musing the fire burned." Rousseau, in fact, was rather like a Hebrew prophet under an ecstasy of inspiration than a literary man setting himself a definite task. Till near the age of forty he had thought of music rather than of literature as his vocation. He wrote his books under the weight of ideas that over-stimulated and overmastered his weak sensibility, and forced his natural indolence for several years—"six years of madness and fever," he says—to the most strenuous tasks of literary composition. And when he had uttered his message he sank into a long silence, broken only by polemical or autobiographical writings. He always spoke of his literary career as his greatest misfortune; and this, which was generally taken for affectation, was probably, in his sense, nothing more than the truth. The tension of thought and utterance once passed by, Rousseau found himself exhausted and unstrung, incapable any longer of the simple

happiness which he always regarded as the best result of life. Between the ecstasy and almost agony of vision and expression, the excitement of literary success, and the persecutions by which it was followed, his sensitive mechanism had received a fatal shock. The world had come into his life, and, seek what solitude he would, he could no longer shut it out. He persisted, however, to the last in believing that he needed only one thing for the return of his former peace, namely, a complete exclusion of the world; and the fact that peace would not return seemed to him a proof that the world was in a conspiracy against him. A frenzy of suspicion took possession of him, as of the Jacobins in the Reign of Terror, when the disappointment of their hopes of an unearthly Millennium seemed to be in itself a sufficient proof of the continued machinations of aristocrats.

There is, in truth, more than a superficial analogy between the two cases. The pure fanatical spirit of revolution which animated the Jacobin chiefs can awake in those, and in those only, who forget that we are always accomplices in the evils that oppress us, and who therefore set themselves to reform the world without an effort to reform

themselves. Something more than the death of aristocrats, something after which, we may trust it is now striving in a more hopeful way, was needed to make France free. Something more than passive good wishes, and freedom from outward hindrances, is needed to give inner harmony to the soul of man. But Rousseau always held to the principle that *in magnis voluisse sat est*, that good intentions are everything, and that, if they bear fruit in bad actions, it is the fault of circumstances, of social arrangements, and not in any degree of the individual himself. Hence that insane self-glorification which startles us at the beginning of the *Confessions*, in which he heads the undisguised record of his weaknesses with the assertion that he is the best of men. It is no more than the truth that Rousseau had a stronger longing for ideal good, a deeper sympathy with the poor and the oppressed, a keener feeling for natural and moral beauty, than perhaps any writer of his time. It was unfortunate, however, that the lover of virtue and humanity was incapable of enduring the presence of men in the concrete, and that his whole life was an insatiable craving for pleasurable sensations. "The

laurels of mere wishing are withered leaves that never have been green."

Let us not, however, be unjust to Rousseau. His very incapacity for action, his weakness in the practical world, combined with the passionate intensity of his inner life, were the necessary conditions of his power. Repelled by the mere "rage to destroy without building up," which had taken possession of even the better minds of his time, he asked himself what were the sound elements beneath that which was artificial and corrupt in the dissolving social organisation around him. And, like Wordsworth, who directly or indirectly received many influences from him,[1] he found these healthy elements in the love of nature and the sympathies and duties of the family. He revealed to a sophisticated generation the primal charities, the first affections, out of which the purity and sweetness of life must spring. If there is sometimes a strained and artificial tone in his denunciation of artifice, if there is a tinge of impurity in his pictures of the pure

[1] The influence of Wordsworth's residence in France upon the direction of his thoughts has perhaps not been sufficiently considered.

life of nature, we must remember that his passionate revolt against the disease of society would scarcely have been possible, if he had not shared it. "They that are whole have no need of a physician."

Moreover, it was something to find among the great literary men of such a time one who so entirely identified himself not with the cultured few, but with the uncultured many. "C'est le peuple qui compose le genre humain: ce qui n'est pas peuple est si peu de chose, que ce n'est pas la peine de la compter." Rousseau's sympathy with the common people, his demand for them not of charity but of social justice, the irresistible force of his assertion of the claims of bare humanity not only to toleration and help but to respect and reverence, was a new note added to the moral harmonies of life, a new interpretation of the Christian law of brotherhood. If it led immediately to revolt and revolution, it also led *beyond* revolution to a better order of social and political life. It was something in an age of social privilege "to make poor men proud,"—conscious of themselves and of their dignity as men: nay, it was even necessary, if a higher social dignity

can only be formed out of freer and more self-dependent units. Burke, the great theoretical antagonist of the Revolution, who alone at the time saw the fundamental error of its abstract principles, was blinded by his historic imagination, when he supposed that full justice had been done to their partial truth in the institutions which the Revolution had to destroy.

In Rousseau's summons to his generation to return to nature, there was, however, as in his own character, an almost inextricable mingling of true and false elements. The state of nature to which he would have men return is by no means a fixed and definite thing. It is, in fact, defined rather negatively than affirmatively, by opposition to the artificial state which civilisation has produced. It is the life of the country as opposed to the life of towns, the life of the family as opposed to the life of the State, the life of simple tastes and natural pleasures as opposed to the life of cultivated luxury. Where, as in the *Discourse on the Causes of Inequality*, he attempts to be precise in his definitions, it reduces itself to the life of the savage, who is no better than an animal except in his superior craft, and

who is so far worse than some animals that he has no permanent social tendency.

But Rousseau has no sooner drawn this description of the state of nature in all its bareness, than he begins to modify his assertion of its desirableness. The preferable state, he allows, is not the pure state of nature, but a stage of human development somewhat beyond it, in which there is at least a certain settled order of the family. Here is to be found the "golden mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our selfishness, and it must be the most happy and durable state." The picture set before us at the end of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* is an idealised reproduction of the order of domestic life in a simple society, combined with many of the aids of civilisation.

Again, in the *Social Contract*, the political union itself is admitted to bring compensations with it, which are more valuable than the independence it forces us to renounce. "The passage from the state of nature to the civil state," he declares, "produces in man a very remarkable change, in so far as it substitutes justice for instinct as the guide of his conduct, and gives to

his actions a morality which was hitherto wanting to them. . . . Though by this change he deprives himself of many of his natural advantages, those he acquires in return are so great, his faculties are exercised and developed, his ideas are extended, his sentiments are ennobled, and his whole soul is elevated to such a degree that, if the abuses of his new condition did not often degrade him below that from which he has emerged, he would have cause to bless without ceasing the happy moment which for ever rescued him from it, and which, out of a stupid and unthinking animal, made him an intelligent being and a man."[1]

Lastly, in the *Emile*, after a slight reference to the state of nature which dispenses man from the necessity of any artificial education, Rousseau dedicates the rest of the book to the description of an elaborate training by which the blessings of culture are to be attained without any loss of the independence and simplicity of nature.

Rousseau, therefore, in practice, treats the state of nature and isolation which he supposes to have existed

[1] *Contrat Social*, i. 8.

in the past, merely as a point of view from which he may recommend a certain line of progress in the future. On one occasion he even says, that it does not matter whether or not the state of nature has ever existed. "It is no easy enterprise to disentangle that which is original from that which is artificial in the actual state of man, and to make ourselves well acquainted with a state which no longer exists, *which perhaps never has existed*, and which probably never will exist in the future, but of which, nevertheless, it is necessary to have just notions, in order to estimate aright our present state."[1] In other words, the natural state is an ideal involved in the nature of man, and of which we may discover the traces underneath all his changes, just as we may assert that the social contract is tacitly implied and recognised in every actual society, though "it may never have found formal expresssion" in any constitution whatever.[2]

In looking for this ideal, Rousseau's method is always determined by the individualistic prejudices of his time. In morals, in politics, and in religion alike, he goes back from the complex to

[1] Preface to the *Treatise on the Causes of Inequality.*

[2] *Contrat Social*, i. 6.

the simple; and for him, the simple is always the purely individual, the subject apart from the object, the man apart from society. He does not see that in this way he is gradually emptying consciousness of all its contents, and that of the abstract individual at which he must finally arrive, nothing can be said.

The first step in the path of this logic leads him to treat the social bond in all its forms as something secondary and artificial, something that may easily lead to a corruption or distortion of the natural goodness of man, or which can only be prevented from doing so by the most elaborate expedients. The aim of politics, he holds, is to maintain the natural independence of the individual in spite of the social union; the State is grounded, not in man's natural sociality (for he is not naturally social), but in an external necessity. In the increase of population a time comes when the "obstacles which are opposed to their preservation in a state of nature become too great for the forces which each individual can employ to maintain himself in that state."[1] It then becomes necessary for men to combine, and the problem of

[1] *Contrat Social*, i. 6.

politics is, to secure the advantages of combination without the loss of individual liberty, "to find a form of association which may defend and protect the person and property of each associate with the whole common force, and in which each one, while he unites himself to all, yet may obey none but himself, and remain as free as before." And this problem can be solved only in a State in which every one exercises the sovereign legislative power for himself; for only in such a State can there be a *volonté générale*, which does not represent any particular interest; only in such a State will the particular interests neutralise each other, so as to allow the general interest to come into force. But on the other hand, a will, which is merely the common element of all particular wills, cannot be in collision with any one of them; and under its rule, therefore, every citizen may preserve his natural liberty.

In the *Emile* Rousseau's logic follows a similar course. The method of education, he constantly tells us, should be *negative* and not *positive*. "The greatest, the most important, the most useful rule of all education is not to gain time, but to lose it," *i.e.*, to guard the pupil against

extraneous influences that anticipate the natural development of his powers,—to keep the way clear, and then to stand aside, and let Nature do her work. The master is never to teach, but always to contrive that the pupil should discover everything for himself, never to constrain or command, but always leave the pupil to the teaching of experience. It is true, as Rousseau confesses, that this method really involves the most elaborate and artificial adaptation of circumstances that may influence the pupil in any way desired; but this artifice is necessary, just because nature has been so much distorted by social arrangements. The aim of education is only to restore artificially the natural order of human development.

Now it is scarcely necessary to show that the idea which Rousseau is pursuing is an empty abstraction; Rousseau himself practically confesses that it is so. To protect the natural man from all interference, to make society into a means, not of coercing or restraining the natural will, but simply of re-enforcing it, would, if it were possible, be to stop at the very outset the moral education of man. The untameable savage, just so far as he is untameable, is incapable of civilisation, and even

slavery has sometimes been an instrument in the development of man's higher nature, by breaking down the arbitrariness of the undisciplined will. When Rousseau seeks to arrange education so that the child shall never feel the pressure of a will superior to its own, he is really doing all he can to prevent the growth of a moral consciousness.

The theory of the *Emile* might have its value—nay, it undoubtedly had its value—as a protest against a system partly ascetic and partly conventional, in which the natural tendencies of youth were neglected, or crushed under arbitrary routine; but it leaves out of account the truth that man must die to live, must rise above himself in order to be himself, must have the caprice of nature subdued in him in order that he may attain to true freedom. Rousseau tries systematically to evade this necessity, to make the natural expand gradually into the moral, the selfish into the social, without a break or division between the higher and lower self; yet even his own imperfect analysis of the social bond, and of the process of education, forces from him many admissions which are inconsistent with his theory.

The social pact, *e.g.*, is supposed to be based on

the fact that there is a common element in all wills, a common interest of all the citizens, which therefore they may co-operate in pursuing, without prejudice to their particular interests. But Rousseau soon admits that the *volonté générale* is not the same as the *volonté de tous*, and that to maintain the social bond the former must subordinate, and even suppress the latter. Society must "force the individuals to be free," because their natural will, "the impulse of appetite, is slavery, and obedience to self-prescribed law alone is liberty." Thus, at a turn of the hand, the abstract individual passes into the abstract universal, and the anarchy of individual will changes into the despotism of the State. Starting with the idea of the natural independence of every individual, Rousseau ends with a social despotism, in which every interest of life is regulated and controlled by the State. And when in the *Emile* this contradiction is forced upon his attention, Rousseau thinks it enough to tell us that we must choose between the natural man and the citizen, for we cannot have both; and that the defect of the present mode of education is that it is directed to two opposite ends, and therefore fails in attaining either, but only produces

hommes doubles, who have neither the independence of the natural man, nor that absolute absorption in the *moi commun* of the State which characterised the citizens of ancient Rome or Sparta. Of any union of social and individual liberty which does not involve the suppression of one or the other, of any organic unity of society in which the freedom of the members shall be consistent with the unity of the body politic, Rousseau has no conception, and, just because of this, his theory fluctuates between one and the other. In the end he seems to despair of political life, and he seeks to educate his Emile independently of any society, or at least of any society beyond the family. The "sole natural education is the domestic education," and, when it is completed, the ideal pupil has learned to regard his civic duty as something secondary and accidental, and not as the real object of his life. Though, therefore, Rousseau makes the inconsistent admission that man is "sociable by his nature, or, at least, made to become so," and that the "civil state alone gives man that moral liberty which makes him truly master of himself," yet he never frees himself from the fixed idea of his individualism,

that the natural man is good in himself, and that all the responsibility of his errors and perversions is to be thrown upon society.

The side of Rousseau's speculation which perhaps has best preserved its interest for the present time is his defence of religion. In this defence he follows his usual method. As he sought for the healthy elements of social life by abstracting from all the complexities of civilisation and falling back upon the sentiments of the natural man, so, beneath the various structures of dogma and institution in which the different religions of the world have realised themselves, he endeavours to distinguish the primitive movement of religious feeling. As the State has its origin in a *moi commun* which is identical in all individuals, so religion must rest on a universal *sentiment intérieur*, a "conscience" or "common reason" (for Rousseau uses all these names for it), which is the residuum that remains when we leave out the differences of individuals and nations. "I know," he says on one occasion, "that the common reason is very limited, and that, when we go beyond its narrow bounds, every one has his own reason that is proper to himself." This

common reason teaches us to regard the world as a moral system whose centre is in God. "The good man" obeying it "arranges all things with respect to the good of the whole; the bad man" disobeying it "arranges the whole universe with respect to himself. The latter makes himself the centre of all things; the former measures his radius, and keeps himself in the circumference. Thus he finds his due place at once in regard to the common centre, which is God, and in regard to all the concentric circles, which are his fellow-creatures." [1] The answer to all the objections of pessimism, based on the existence of moral and physical evil in the world, is ultimately to be found only in the *sentiment intérieur* which teaches us that God is, and that He is the maintainer of this moral order in the universe. "We do not prove the existence of God by the system of Pope, but we prove the system of Pope by the existence of God." Apart from this faith, all arguments for either optimism or pessimism are a vain jangle of words. For if the pessimists can point to the evils vis-

[1] *Confession of the Savoyard Vicar;* cf. *Letter to Voltaire* on Optimism.

ible in that small part of the universe which is within our experience, it is always open to their opponents to allege that these evils are necessary to the attainment of the highest good, and that they would disappear on a view of the whole. The optimist "does not say that every single thing in itself is good, but only that the whole is good, or that all is good for the whole"; and "no one can give direct proofs for or against this proposition, for such proof could be derived only from a perfect knowledge of the world and of the end proposed by its author, a knowledge which incontestably is far above the reach of man." "If God exists, He is perfect: if He is perfect, He is wise, almighty, and just; if He is just and almighty, my soul is immortal; if my soul is immortal, thirty years of life are nothing to me, and these years, with all that happens in them, may be necessary for the maintenance of the universe." If the first proposition is admitted, the rest can never be shaken; if it be denied, there is no use in disputing about its consequences. Everything, therefore, depends on the truth of that inner sentiment which constrains us to believe in God. "I believe in God as fully

as I believe in any other truth, because to believe or not to believe are the things in the world that are least under my control; because when my reason is wavering, my faith cannot long rest in suspense; because, finally, a thousand motives of preference attract me to the side that is most consoling, and join the weight of hope to the equilibrium of reason."

Have we then a right to believe whatever is "most consoling," whatever, in short, we most strongly desire to believe? Rousseau is fully aware of this objection to such an assertion of the rights of pure subjective feeling, but his only answer is that we must distinguish the mere feeling of the individual as such, from feeling as the utterance of the *raison commune*. "You bid me," he writes to one correspondent, "distrust this internal assent, but I find in it a natural safeguard against the sophisms of my understanding. And I fear that on this occasion you are confusing the secret inclinations of our heart which lead us astray with that more secret, more inward voice, which reclaims and murmurs against these interested decisions, and brings us back, in spite of ourselves, to the way of truth." At

the same time, Rousseau confesses freely that this appeal to sentiment is powerless as an argument against those who say that they do not feel it. "A proof of sentiment for us," he allows, "cannot become a demonstration for them, and it is not reasonable to say to any one, 'You ought to believe this because I believe it.'" Rousseau is in the difficulty of one who appeals solely to the individual as such, who indeed admits no other appeal, and who nevertheless asserts that there is such a thing as universal truth. But, from this point of view, a universal truth could only be that which was believed by every one, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus;* and the first man who honestly denied that he had any such conviction would seem to be a conclusive negative instance against its existence.

The truth is that Rousseau represents in its ultimate onesidedness the principle of Protestantism. Like Rousseau, Luther and Calvin appealed to the inner light, the immediate witness of the spirit, denying the right of the Church to stand between the individual and God; like Rousseau, they declared that the only good evidence of

religion is to be found in the inner experience of the believer. It is true that an attempt was made, especially by the second generation of Protestants, to put the Bible into the vacant place of the Church; but the Bible was no self-interpreting authority, and the true interpretation of it was to be discovered by each one for himself. The spiritual man, the individual who had deepest Christian experience, was to judge all things, and no one would claim to overrule his judgment.

But this brings us back to the difficulty of which we have just spoken. When Rousseau asserted that there was a *raison commune*, whose voice was distinct from the voice of the individual understanding, a *volonté générale*, which was not to be confused with the will of any particular person, he was obliged at the same time to allow that we cannot be sure that this universal element in the intelligence and will of man is uttering itself in any one case or individual. For he admitted, not only that there is an early period in the life of the individual and the race, in which religion and morality can hardly be said to exist; but also that even in later times it requires special conditions to maintain in the individual

that purity and sincerity of heart by which the inner voice of nature can be clearly distinguished from the dictates of the natural will and the individual understanding. And in like manner, the Protestant assertion of the right, or rather of the duty, of private judgment, had to be interpreted as meaning, not that every one was a judge of moral and religious truth, but that every one could become capable of judging, by passing through the necessary spiritual experience. The spiritual man alone, therefore, was the judge of all things; but who was the spiritual man? The question was one of subjective determination, and could as little be brought to any universal tribunal, as the corresponding question of Rousseau, who is the natural man? As in the former case, the spiritual man is needed to discover the spiritual man, so in the latter case the natural man is needed to find out the natural man.

The first effect of the Protestant appeal to the inner witness of the spirit was to awaken a thousand jarring and contradictory voices on every point of Christian doctrine. As it was admitted that every individual could be the

organ of the spirit, so every founder of a sect expressed his own convictions as the Spirit's voice; and Bossuet was soon able to point to the thousand variations of Protestants as the natural and necessary result of their appeal to the individual in place of the Church.

On the other hand, a growing sense of the difficulty of securing agreement led among the Protestants themselves to a more or less definite attempt to simplify the doctrine of Christianity. When divisions arise, the natural tendency of many minds is to fall back on the points which division has not yet touched, and to treat the matters in dispute as of little consequence. Christianity, it was argued, is something which every one must receive on the witness of his own spirit; it must therefore be something free from difficulty and dispute, which the simplest can be expected so to receive. Hence we may abandon as extraneous to Christianity all those doctrines which are beyond the reach of the ordinary understanding. Even the most orthodox felt the force of this logic, and were led by it to throw into the background those doctrines which relate to the absolute nature of God, and

to attach all importance to those which relate to his relations to man. And the most extreme of the Protestant sects, like the Moravians and Quakers, treated all objective doctrine whatever as a secondary affair, and concentrated their attention upon the analysis of the subjective religious experience of the individual.

Rousseau's *Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar* is only the ultimate expression of this tendency. To decide fairly, the vicar argues, between the conflicting claims of the many competing religions of the world, or even between the many interpretations of Christianity, a man must spend his life in travel and research, must make himself a profound metaphysician and a thorough historian; must combine the widest knowledge of facts with superhuman wisdom and insight. "*Je n'ai jamais pu croire que Dieu m'ordonnât, sur peine de l'enfer, d'être si savant.*" "How could Jesus Christ venture to promise the kingdom of heaven to the simple, and commence his most beautiful discourse by blessing the poor in spirit, if it requires so much wit to understand His doctrines?" The creed to which the heart witnesses is something simpler; it

reduces itself to the belief in an *Être Suprême*, who rewards the good and punishes the evil, and to whom therefore we ascribe the attributes of *wisdom* and *goodness*, though sensible that even these words express ideas of human excellence which, strictly speaking, are not transferable to the Divine Being. This alone is a creed which needs no extraneous authority of the Church, no evidence of a revelation given to some one else at a distant time, to accredit it, for it "depends on general principles common to all men," and every simple heart can verify it for itself. "*Est-il simple, est-il naturel que Dieu ait été chercher Moïse pour parler a Jean-Jacques Rousseau ?*"[1]

The main difficulty in relation to this *Profession of Faith* has already been indicated. Rousseau is obliged to admit that the so-called universal belief is not universal; that even this last residuum of religion is accepted only by those whose hearts are prepared for it. Hence his intellectual position was immediately out-flanked by those who still further simplified the dictates of the *raison commune*, and reduced them to

[1] Letter to M. de Beaumont; cf. the second Letter from the Mountain.

morality without religion, or even, as was the case with some of those who were most possessed with the rage of simplification and negation, to the simple appetites.

Rousseau himself, in the description of the earliest state of the natural man, had indicated this necessary result of his logic,—a result from which, however, he had immediately recoiled. The search for universal truth as the simple, the natural, as that which commends itself at once to every individual, is suicidal, for in this search we are gradually forced to abstract the individual from all the conditions under which the universal power of reason can be manifested in him. To seek for the simple voice of nature in this way is about as reasonable as the experiment of the king who shut up an infant in a room by himself in order to determine the primeval language. If, as Rousseau says, "the man who reflects is a depraved animal," where shall we find the simple voice of reason, the unsophisticated utterance of nature? Only it would seem in the pure animal, the nature that feels and desires without reflection. Unfortunately the pure animal has no voice and no utterance whatever.

The great error of Rousseau was to seek the universal truth of religion in some abstract residuum, strained from all the various beliefs of men; just as it was his great error in politics to seek the *volonté générale* in some element of agreement amid the jarring wills of all the citizens. There is no such element in either case. If there is a *raison commune* in the religious history of men, it must be sought in a universal spirit, which progressively manifests itself in and through the particulars as the unity that subordinates their difference and conflict, and not in the abstraction of an *Être Suprême*, which avoids all difficulties simply because it has no contents whatever.

Deism, as it appears in Voltaire and Rousseau, is not a religion at all. Its God is simply, to use a modern illustration, "a not-ourselves, that makes for righteousness," an external Being who attaches happiness to goodness, or a name for the supposed connection of the two, not a Spirit who transcends and embraces all things and beings, and works through the free life of spirits, even through their error and their sin, that he may bring them all to himself. Mr. Morley justly remarks that Deism is a "faith of egoism and

complacency, a kind of gratuitously adopted superfluity, not the satisfaction of a profound inner craving and resistless spiritual necessity." Its inadequate conception of human freedom as a mere "liberty of indifference," divorcing man from God, and consequently also man from man, makes religion in the true sense of the word an impossibility, though it may still leave place for a feeling of moral aspiration. Optimist too as Rousseau was, he never once tasted the sweetness or felt the power of the religion of pity and reconciliation; and he divides the wicked from the good, and discusses the fate of each, without a sense of the brotherhood and solidarity of men."[1]

The work of the Revivers of learning and the Reformers of the Encyclopædists and of Rousseau himself, was to assert the rights of reason; to assert, in other words, that the principle of all man's knowledge and action is within him. Hence they were naturally led to oppose the inward to the outward, the witness of the spirit to the dead letter of tradition, private judgment to the authority of the Church. Such an assertion of the rights of the individual was necessary, if the

[1] Morley's *Rousseau*, ii. p. 269.

implicit reason of faith and feeling was ever to become the explicit reason of science; if the simple unreflected unity of the spirit with the doctrines and institutions of the Christian Church was ever to be mediated by reflection and consciousness.

And it must be remembered that this change of the form of religious thought involved also a great change of the matter; for in becoming, what it essentially is, a religion of spirit, Christianity must necessarily learn to dispense with that machinery of external sign and symbol, of authoritative revelation and miraculous interference, which has been the support of its childhood. As in politics it is the problem of modern times to reassert the principle of order, the *volonté générale*, without the aid of that fiction of divine right—vested in kings or nobles, and separating them from all other men—which had been its inadequate expression in earlier days; so in religion it is the problem of modern times to reassert the self-revelation of the divine spirit *in* the world, and *in* and *for* man, while erasing the absolute line of division with which previous ages had separated priest, and prophet, and apostle from those to whom they spoke.

But the difficulty lies in the transition. Thought develops slowly, and each generation is disposed to exaggerate even to absurdity the aspect of truth which is revealed to it. The Reformers were naturally led to lay too much emphasis on the change of the form of religion, and to give too little thought to the necessary reconstruction of its matter. Not discerning that the individual consciousness is what it is by means of the historical mediation through which it has passed, and that the Catholic Church itself was the necessary presupposition of Protestantism, they spoke as if the long labour of the middle ages had been for naught, and as if the one thing necessary was to sweep its accumulated results away, and go back to the simplicities of the first Christian faith. And it was by a kind of logical necessity—that logical necessity by which one-sided opinions disprove themselves and pass away—that the French successors of the Reformers sought to go back still further, from Christianity to heathen virtue, and from heathen virtue to the simple consciousness of the natural man. "The rage to destroy without rebuilding," which possessed the most extreme followers of Voltaire, is the

necessary culmination of that assertion of the freedom of a merely formal reason against all the contents with which history has filled it. But to liberate man is not merely to break his chains.

The ultimate hope of the human spirit must be to restore as reason what it then sought to destroy as the unreason of authority, to restore as the realisation of freedom what it then rejected as the bonds of an external necessity. This restoration involves, as has already been said, a thorough *re-formation* (in the etymological sense of the word) of the whole edifice of dogma and institution in a way which few of the friends of religion have yet realised, and still fewer have had the faith and courage to attempt. Rousseau, with his instinctive revolt and repulsion at once against the philosophers of his time who sought merely to destroy the existing order, and against the priests who sought merely to resist its destruction, with his divided life, alternating between the fervid assertion of the principle of individualism in its extremest form—the glorification of the natural man—and his equally fervid assertion of the rights of the

common reason and the general will, may be regarded as a *vox clamantis in deserto* to make straight the ways for a faith which is at one with reason.

WORDSWORTH.

IT is to be hoped that the well-chosen selection of Wordsworth's poems which has been edited by Mr. Arnold may do something to extend the knowledge of his characteristic excellences. Wordsworth's poetry, indeed, can never become popular. It is like a pure fountain of living water, hidden away from the trodden paths of literature. To those who seek in poetry only the idealised echo of common passions, it must always appear cold and tasteless. It courts us with none of the usual subsidiary charms and illusions of verse; and it requires, at first, something like a moral effort ere we can put ourselves into the temper for enjoying it; "we must love it, ere to us it will seem worthy of our love." It requires us, in a sense, to become as little children, to divest ourselves of all artificial associations and secondary interests, of all that hides the

essentials of humanity, and to enter a region where everything is estimated at the price which it has for the simplest and most universal human affections.

On the other hand, to those who can bear the shock of this reversal of the usual standards of judgment, and can overcome the first recoil of the "natural man" from the outward sternness and plainness of Wordsworth, and the feeling of incongruity, or even absurdity, which is occasionally produced by his insensibility or indifference to ordinary associations, his poetry will be a source of that highest poetic pleasure which accompanies a deeper sense of the harmony of the world with the soul of man. It will be a kind of religious retreat from the jarring and inconsistency of things, in which they can renew their faith in the ultimate coincidence of "truth and poetry."

Wordsworth cannot be made popular. But one thing more might be done to give fair play to his "elective affinities," and to remove the increasing difficulties of understanding him, which time brings with it; his poems might be rearranged in chronological order, and each of them might be accompanied with an explanation of the

circumstances of its composition. Wordsworth is a poet, whose poetry gathers closely about his life, and cannot in many cases be fully appreciated except by those who carry in their minds some picture of the occasions when it was produced. From this point of view the present arrangement of the poems is altogether misleading and artificial—depending mainly on some psychological view of the relations of the different faculties, fancy, imagination, the affections, etc.—a view which is not very distinct, and which, at best, is foreign to the real interest of poetry. Nor would Mr. Arnold's arrangement of the poems as ballad, lyric, elegiac, etc., be much of an improvement as applied to the whole of the poems—however fitting it may be for a selection. The reader of poetry does not want illustrations either of abstract psychology or of the philosophy of Art; the only thing he need care for—beyond the individual poems themselves—is the connection they have as different expressions of the same poetic spirit. And this, in the case of Wordsworth at least, he must care for, if he would fully understand their meaning. Anyone who will take the trouble to read the poems in the

order in which they are mentioned in the *Life of Wordsworth*, and with the explanations there given, will at once feel this. Wordsworth's biographer truly says, that "the poems, to be studied profitably, should be read chronologically"; and Professor Knight, in his interesting volume on *The English Lake District as interpreted in the Poems of Wordsworth* (preface, p. 21), has urged the necessity of an edition such as we have described. We hope that, before long, Professor Knight, or someone equally competent, if such can be found, may be induced to undertake the labour of such an edition.[1] In that case, all that is possible will have been done to remove outward hindrances to the appreciation of Wordsworth, and it may safely be left to time, to raise to his proper place a poet whose fame depends so little upon temporary or accidental attractions, and so much upon the deepest and most permanent sources of human emotion.

> If thou, indeed, derive thy light from heaven,
> Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
> Shine, poet, in thy place, and be content!

[1] This passage was written before Professor Knight's classical edition of Wordsworth's poems was published.

Wordsworth was a poet who took his vocation in earnest. He rejected as insincere "poetic diction" the old invocations of the Muse; but no poet ever had a deeper sense of being a "dedicated spirit," a *vates sacer*, whose inspiration did not come from himself. He was for himself prophet as well as poet, one whose vocation was not merely to please men, but to teach them with what they should be pleased. "Every great poet," he says, "is a teacher. I wish to be considered either as a teacher, or as nothing." When the critics of his day reminded him that the end of verse is to produce pleasure, he answered that an original poet has to *create* the taste by which he can be enjoyed. "Of genius in the fine arts the only infallible sign is the *widening* of the sphere of human sensibility"; "genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe." And he met the neglect and ridicule, with which for many years his poetry was treated, with an unshaken faith that it was founded upon the truth of nature, and that it could not but find or make its audience.

Nor did this conviction relate only to form of expression, it related also to the content or matter

expressed; indeed the one could not be separated from the other. Wordsworth believed that he had a fresh and hitherto unexpressed view of man and his relations to the world to communicate, although he recognised that it is not the function of the poet to deal with truth directly, but only as it can find sensuous expression in beauty, and be made part of the emotional life of man. "The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor, he cherishes it and loves it in his solitude; the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is on the countenance of all science." Wherever, in fact, science ceases to be a merely external thing; wherever its isolated truths are brought together in relation to humanity, and are thus made part of our immediate consciousness of ourselves, they become, in Wordsworth's view, capable of poetic treatment. "Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge." If the time should ever come, when what is called science, thus familiarised to man, should be ready

to put on a form of flesh and blood, the poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration." Wordsworth thus makes poetry the counterpart and coadjutor of philosophy, in so far as it is the business of philosophy, by a last synthesis, to bring the manifold truths of science into unity with each other, and with the mind of man.

There are many critics at the present day who tell us that such a view of the office of the poet is altogether erroneous, and that poetry has nothing to do with the teaching of truth, or with truth in any shape. Some go so far as to say, that what we have to regard in a poet is not what he has said, but simply how he has said it. It is probably by way of protest against such a doctrine, that Mr. Arnold has allowed himself to say that "poetry is essentially a criticism of life"; which it is, only in the same sense in which there *is* "a moral shut in the blossom of a rose," or in which a good man may be said to be a living criticism upon a bad one.

For it cannot be denied that, in poetry, the form is the first thing. *Its* function is pure expression for its own sake, and the consideration of

what is expressed must be secondary. The Muses would undoubtedly prefer a good bacchanalian song to Zachary Boyd's metrical version of the *Bible*. Yet, after all, we cannot reckon it a great poetic advancement to write the best possible drinking song. Perfect, or relatively perfect, expression being given, we must ask what is expressed, and we cannot give the name of sacred poet to the "idle singer of an empty day," but only to him who can express the deepest and widest interests of human life ; nay, only to him who is in sympathy with the progressive movement of mankind, and who can reveal to us new sources of thought and feeling that have not before been touched. The only poetry that, in the long run, "humanity will not willingly let die," is that which contains not mere variations on the old themes, but "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme."

Now Wordsworth can stand this test as well as any poet who ever lived. There is no poet who is more distinctly unique and of his own kind, no poet the annihilation of whose works would more obviously deprive us of a definite and original vein of thought and sentiment. And there is no poet,

below the great master-lights of poetry, Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, and Goethe, whose work is so independent of theirs. Out of Goethe one might carve the materials for most of the modern poets of the second rank: but neither out of Goethe nor anyone else could one carve the materials for Wordsworth. And when Wordsworth is at his best, he stands quite on the level of the very highest.

After saying so much, we are bound to add that Wordsworth is often not at his best—that there is a defect in his utterance which distinctly separates him from the greatest poets, and which at times depresses him below even the second rank. His inspiration is lacking in continuity, and he is apparently unable to distinguish when he is inspired and when he is not. He feeds us at one time with angel's food, with "star fire and immortal tears," and at another time with the homeliest bread-and-butter of moral commonplace. Such poems as *The Star-gazers* or the *Sonnet written near Dover*, show the abruptness with which he falls and rises, from prose to poetry, from poetry to prose. Sometimes we are tempted to think that he struck off a few lines in the first

heat of vision, and afterwards coolly filled in the rest when the vision had departed.

Such shocks of transition we do not often meet with even in second-rate poets: for, when poetic inspiration fails, they generally have rhetorical resources to help them over the difficulty. But Wordsworth is almost entirely free from rhetoric: he has no *callida junctura* to disguise the union of the products of pure imagination with less valuable materials. His poetry is sometimes like a geological stratum, which has been partially transformed by fire, but in which unchanged masses of sand and pebbles are embedded. The baldest matter of fact and the barest moral commonplace are in not a few of his poems put side by side with "thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

But even this defect of Wordsworth seems to have a counterbalancing advantage. Just because he makes no artificial effort to raise himself above the level of prose, but only lets himself be raised by the swelling tide of inspiration, there is a genuineness, an authentic stamp of poetic insight on his best work, which cannot be mistaken. One proof of this is that, however often repeated,

his utterances never seem to become hackneyed. There is nothing unreal or rhetorical in them to spoil; and gold when it is quite pure will not rust. And this is the more remarkable that a tone of majesty so often prevails in his best passages: for majesty is of all tones that in which an element of artificiality or false sentiment most easily betrays itself. The reason seems to be that Wordsworth always writes (as he tells us the poet should always write) "with his eye on the object." Unfortunately it is sometimes the eye of the mere observer which isolates the object observed from all others, not the eye of the poet which finds the whole in every part, and, so to speak, dissolves the immediate perception of separate facts in the unity of one animating idea. Hence the conscientious exactness and faithfulness which kills everything like rhetoric, sometimes also checks and kills the movement of poetic imagination. Thus, to take an example from the first passage that presents itself, in the beginning of the Dedication to the *Sonnets on the River Duddon* we find the following verse:—

> "The minstrels played their Christmas tune
> To-night beneath my cottage eaves:

> While, smitten by a lofty moon,
> The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
> Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen
> That overpowered their natural green."

In the last line the resolute exactness of Wordsworth is no doubt seen, but the very carefulness with which he describes the appearance before him seems to take us away from the "synthetic mood" of poetry, in which the living spirit of the whole must overpower and subordinate the distinct appreciation of the details. Yet again—for the defects of genius are strangely bound up with its qualities—this *prosaic* exactness has for its counterpart what we may call a *poetic* exactness of mind; a simple and direct grasp of the truth which gives to Wordsworth's treatment of the most subtle and evanescent of spiritual influences, something of the precision of a scientific definition. He writes with his eye always on the object, and he describes what he sees "in worlds to which the heaven of heavens is a veil," with the same firmness of touch which he uses in dealing with "some simpler matter of to-day."

The confusion just indicated between two kinds of truth, the truth of poetic imagination, and the

truth of simple observation, seems to underlie Wordsworth's æsthetic heresy: that poetry is not distinct in kind from prose, and that "the language of real life," as he calls it, when purified from degrading or conventional elements, is at once adapted for poetic uses. In this his determination to get rid of the meaningless "poetic diction," then in fashion, and to seek the poetic in the natural, makes him forget the immense distinction between the utterance which is an end in itself and the utterance which is a means to an end. As philosophers have said that the "real is the rational," so a poet may be allowed to declare that the "real is the poetic"; but this must not be understood to mean that the world, as it is to mere common sense and the ordinary understanding, is in itself poetic, but only that there is nothing in the world which cannot *become* poetic, if it is seen *sub specie æternitatis*, under the "light that never was on land or sea." But though Wordsworth sees that "the consecration and the poet's dream" are needful, ere the world can be what it is to the imaginative insight of the poet; yet often, both in practice and theory, he encourages the idea that there is no vital distinction between the

prosaic and the poetic view of the world, and therefore between the modes of language in which each has to be expressed.

We cannot, however, fully appreciate the strength and the weakness of Wordsworth, without looking beyond these formal considerations, and asking what are the main ideas by which he is guided and inspired, or, in other words, what is the *content* of his poetry.

Wordsworth would probably have been willing to accept it as a fair description of his work that he had brought poetry back to nature. But this only suggests another question—what did Wordsworth mean by *Nature?* The generation to which he spoke was one to which the lesson "Return to Nature" was preached by many voices, and with many shades of meaning. Indeed it might be said without much exaggeration that the whole labour of that generation, speculative and practical, was an effort to discover the true interpretation of that old maxim of the moralists. The boundless hope of the regeneration of man, of the liberation of his "nature" from the powers that oppressed it, and prevented its manifestation, which was expressed in different ways by Rousseau

and by the Encyclopædists, found an echo in all civilised countries. And almost every youth who afterwards showed anything of the power of genius was swept away by the new enthusiasm of humanity that attended the first stages of the French Revolution.

> "Before them shone a glorious world,
> Fresh as a banner bright unfurled
> To music suddenly";
>
> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."

To such spirits the Revolution in its first dawn appeared to promise the absolute liberation of man from the yoke of custom and tradition, and to put the highest social good within his immediate grasp. They felt as men awakening from a charmed sleep, and the evils of the past were in their eyes like the creations of a troubled dream, which the daylight must for ever banish. It seemed to them for the time that the hindrances to human happiness were merely external, and that with the removal of a few corrupt institutions the social ideal could be at once realised. *Nature* was that sound kernel, that basis of truth and goodness in

humanity, which would be reached at once by simply removing a few husks and excrescences which had overlaid and concealed it.

Of all those who felt the contagion of that enthusiasm of hope which prevailed in France in the dawn of the Revolution, no one was more deeply influenced by it than Wordsworth, for it appealed to thoughts and feelings which had been growing strong in him through all his earlier education among the Cumberland hills. It made him conscious of himself and of his vocation. Wordsworth, indeed, was never, so far as we know, a worshipper of Rousseau.[1] Indeed he never was one who learned much directly from books; his reluctance to reading was at all times great, and in later years grew into positive aversion. But he was singularly responsive to the influences of outward nature, and also, at least during his youth and early manhood, he was deeply moved by the spirit of the times in which he lived. As he paints himself in the *Prelude*, we see that the one strong power that moulded his early life was the "dear native region":

[1] He quotes Rousseau only once, I think, in the *Epistle to the Bishop of Llandaff*.

and he refers but doubtfully and coldly to any other teacher. The simple, almost rustic freedom of the life which he then lived in the hills of Cumberland took so strong a hold upon him that he never cared for any other. He had Rousseau's distaste for what seemed to him the luxurious and artificial life of cities.

> "The services of artificial life,
> And manners finely wrought, the delicate race
> Of colours lurking, gleaming, up and down,
> Through that state arras woven with silk and gold,
> . . . . I neither knew nor cared for."

Every high and pure feeling in him was, as he tells us, associated with the life of shepherds.

> "Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
> His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

The only effect of his stay at the University of Cambridge seems to have been to drive him back upon himself, and to make him feel that he "was not for that hour, nor for that place." In the *Prelude* his almost comic apologies for his neglect of the studies of the University are mingled with doubts whether it would have been

for his advantage to have attended to them. And before the natural term of college life was reached, he had defied the censure of his friends, and escaped with a chosen companion for a long walking tour in France, Italy, and Switzerland, which supplied the subject for his earliest published poem, the *Descriptive Sketches.* But the joy of France, then in the first enthusiasm of liberty, took hold upon him, and he returned to that country to watch for more than a year the course of the Revolution—of which, indeed, he was in some danger of becoming a victim if he had not been recalled to England by his friends. The deep despondency, and almost despair, into which he was thrown by the events of the Reign of Terror, and still more by England's declaration of war against the French Republic, are pictured in his autobiographical poem, and also in his account of "The Solitary," in the *Excursion.* Living in the Isle of Wight, he tells us how his heart sank within him as he listened every evening to the cannon of the English fleet: he even confesses that he rejoiced in every defeat or disaster of the English armies, and that he only became reconciled to the war with France, when France

seemed to become a weapon of the ambition of Napoleon.

After the French attack upon Switzerland, however, his sympathies changed, and even began to run with vehemence in another direction. France was now to him the great oppressor of the world; and in some of his noblest verse he greeted every appearance of national resistance to the conqueror. In the remarkable pamphlet which he wrote against the Convention of Cintra, he denounced that Convention as showing on the part of the English generals an utter disregard of the moral forces arrayed against Napoleon. And in his fine sonnets *On National Liberty and Independence* he expresses his conviction that these forces are everything. "The power of armies is a visible thing, formal and circumscribed in time and space," and it cannot conquer the "subtle element," the irrepressible force of national life, which "rises like water."

> "Winds blow and waters roll,
> Strength to the brave, and power and deity,
> *Yet in themselves are nothing.*"

Wordsworth's political changes have been the subject of considerable comment. And it is true

that in the somewhat narrow conservatism of his age we almost lose sight of the young enthusiast who rejoiced in the name of Republican. His later hostility to France he could, indeed, justify by saying that the same principles which led him to sympathise with the French when they were defending their liberties, made him turn against them when they became the enemies of national liberty in other countries. Yet this alone will scarcely carry us over the gulf that separates the disciple of Rousseau, who wrote the *Epistle to the Bishop of Llandaff* and the *Descriptive Sketches*, from the panegyrist of Laud and Charles the First, who wrote the *Sonnets on Ecclesiastical History*. The truth is, that Wordsworth's antagonism to the abstractions of revolutionary theory carried him ultimately, as it carried many at that time, dangerously near to the opposite extreme.

Besides, we must not expect too much of any human life; and the flow of Wordsworth's inspiration began about the year 1816 to give place to the inevitable ebb. The struggle was over, and a repose, which was partly the repose of age, stole upon his mind. With a few notable

exceptions, the products of his genius after this period are the imperfect echoes of the old music; or, as in the case of the *Sonnets on Ecclesiastical History*, they are a kind of poetical exercises, which are rather a burden than an addition to his earlier works. One of the advantages of a chronological arrangement of the poems would be the separation of this feebler "aftermath" from the first rich harvest of the muse.

Leaving out of account this tribute to human weakness, however, there is a sense in which we may truly say that Wordsworth was faithful to the end to the principles of his youth; or that the change through which he passed was only the change of a true development, the change of the acorn into the oak. What made him in his youth so strong a partisan of the Revolution was his faith in man, and his indifference to all the external disparities of rank and circumstance; and he was a believer to the last in this primitive gospel of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The apparent failure of the French Revolution, the gathering tragedy of the Reign of Terror, came to him, therefore, not merely as a painful shock of sur-

prise, and disappointment, but as a deadly blow at his faith in good and his hopes for humanity.

The way in which such a blow is met is a fair gauge of moral strength. To the majority of the enthusiasts of the time the result of the Revolution in France brought nothing but the feeling that they had been the victims of an illusion; nothing but a lesson of sceptical moderation and a loss of faith in spiritual forces. There were others—and their successors still remain—who were unable either to give up their passionate hope for humanity or to change its form, and who persisted in repeating with increased vehemence the creed which destiny had weighed in the balance and found wanting. But in minds really creative and original, the disappointment gave occasion neither to despair nor to violence, but became a critical turning point of thought, leading them to ask how the belief in man which they could not surrender, was to be reconciled with the failure of their immediate expectations. For such minds, the ideas of "Nature" and "Liberty," the ideas of the Revolution, did not become unmeaning, but received a

new interpretation, in which they were purified, as by fire, from the base alloy with which they had been mingled. An idea, like a seed, "cannot be quickened unless it die," and only those, who could keep the faith of the Revolution unquenched through its seeming failure, were capable of finding out the truth which underlay that faith and gave it its power.

Now, among the men of genius who sought thus to re-interpret the ideas of the time, the name of Wordsworth deserves a high place. If we contrast him with some of the greatest poetic voices of his generation, with Shelley or Byron, we see that while they on the whole belong to the Revolution, Wordsworth belongs to the Reconstruction. That stormy discontent with self and the world, which utters itself in every poem of Byron, contains little that had not been expressed with greater force by Rousseau, unless it be that Rousseau speaks the voice of hope, and Byron that of disappointment, if not of despair. And though the somewhat shrill, but pure and penetrating, melody of Shelley's song seems to be far removed from the sentimentalism of Rousseau, yet the essential purport of it is the deification

of pure impulse, the vindication of nature as against all restraints.

On the other hand, Wordsworth's poetry is in its essence original and creative; it carries us into a new intellectual region in which the ideas of the Revolution have not perished, but have, as it were, risen again in a better form. Of course, this does not at once settle the comparative value of Wordsworth's poetic achievements; for the content of poetry is nothing without the form. But, on the other hand, it may be equally said that the form is little without the content; and in the gift of creative insight, which makes him the poet of the future rather than of the past, Wordsworth stands beyond every poet of his day, except Goethe. And if he is without Goethe's wide culture and sympathy with all the elements of social and intellectual progress, he is, as unmistakably as Goethe himself, the representative of new spiritual forces, of thoughts and feelings which had never found poetic expression until Wordsworth expressed them.

That this is true, and that Wordsworth is a poet with whom the principles of the Revolution acquire a new and higher meaning, may be

seen more clearly by a comparison of the leading ideas of his poetry with those of Rousseau. Rousseau, like Wordsworth, was the prophet of Nature, as opposed to everything that is arbitrary and conventional. And this general contrast had with him three different though closely related meanings.

In the first place, Rousseau called attention to certain harmonies between the outward world and the soul of man, which till his time had passed almost unobserved. He found outward Nature to be most human in its meaning, just where it had been hitherto regarded as most inhuman. Not the garden or the meadow, but the "sounding cataract, the tall rock, the mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood," were his chosen haunts. He reconciled man to the world, and taught him to find rest and refreshment for the weary spirit in the wild freedom of Nature, and in presence of those awful manifestations of her power which had hitherto been considered most alien and unfriendly to humanity. And in this way he opened up sources of emotional experience, springs of poetry and imaginative delight, which had scarcely been touched by any writer before his time.

Again, in the second place, Rousseau meant by a *return to Nature*, an assertion of the supreme importance of the primary bonds of human affection, and in connection therewith, of the dignity of the humblest forms of human labour, and especially of the pastoral and agricultural life. A simple rustic existence, in which the charities of the family are little disturbed by the ambitions and rivalries of civilisation, seemed to him to be the ideal of what is healthful for man, morally and intellectually. Hence his denunciations of luxury, and his fanatical attack on the arts and sciences, as corrupting the simplicity of human life—extravagances which received a colour of excuse from the fact that they were addressed to a society in which the weapons of civilisation had been often turned against the first principles of social morality.

Lastly, Rousseau meant by a *return to Nature*, a return by each man upon himself, an awakening in him of a consciousness of his capacities, his rights, and his duties. The individual man was to him, not merely a part in a great social whole, but a whole in himself, a being not to be subjected to any *external* authority, to any authority

except the *raison commune* which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." In this sense the teaching of Rousseau was only a last development of the principle of the Reformation, that no authority can claim man's belief or homage, except the God who speaks within him. Unfortunately the doctrine was formulated by Rousseau in such a way as to sever the individual from that general social life of humanity, through which all spiritual culture must come to him; and thus the vindication of freedom changed, in his hands, into a declamation against civilisation, and an apotheosis of the "noble savage."

Now it may be shown that almost all Wordsworth's most powerful and characteristic utterances grew out of one or other of these three lessons of Rousseau—though, at the same time, not one of them is simply echoed, but all are transformed in the light of a purer, if not a greater, genius. Wordsworth is Rousseau moralised, Christianised, and, as it were, transfigured by the light of imagination. The one-sidedness of the revolutionary ideas may not always be completely transcended; but a deeper spiritual feeling, and a finer poetic insight, has done much to discover the essential

truth of the gospel of "Nature and Freedom," and to separate it from the baser elements, with which in Rousseau it was mingled.

1. The love of the wilder and grander aspects of natural beauty, of mountain and woodland untouched by the hand of man, is the first element of Wordsworth's poetry. No one has expressed more fully the power of wild nature to elevate and refresh the soul of man, to stir within him new sympathies, which are deeply seated, and, perhaps, for that very reason were long hidden from the ordinary consciousness. His first gift as a poet, the natural basis of his genius, was that intense organic sensibility to the immediate beauties of sight or sound, which showed itself even in his earliest years. "Yes," he says—

> "Yes, I remember when the changeful earth
> And twice five summers on my mind had stamped
> The features of the moving year, even then
> I held unconscious intercourse with beauty
> Old as creation, drinking in a pure
> Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
> Of curling mist, or from the level plain
> Of waters, coloured by impending clouds."—(Vol. v. 176.)

While in his boyhood, he had already noticed "the infinite variety of natural appearances which

had not been mentioned by the poets, so far as I was acquainted with them." This natural sensibility of his was, as it were, the crystallising centre round which his poetry grew; but it is seldom that in his verse he is content simply to picture the objects before him. His most common method is to make the immediate object the starting-point of a meditative thought which hovers between the outward and the inward, and uses each alternately to interpret the other. His great theme, as he tells us, is the "wedding" of the intellect of man "to this goodly universe, in love and holy passion." And somehow the slow ruminative movement, with which he seeks out the correspondence and harmonies of nature and spirit, does not prove inconsistent with the sensuous fervour of poetry. The poems on *Matthew*, or the *Ode to Lycoris*, show how Wordsworth can make meditation musical, without any heightening of its natural tones.

Perhaps, however, his greatest successes, those in which he reaches the height of absolute vision, are to be found in certain passages in which, by a single stroke, he breaks down the wall between outward and inward, so that "finding" and

"creating" seem to be only different aspects of the same thing. One familiar instance of those sudden and certain intuitions by which Wordsworth not seldom dissipates the veil of sense, and brings us into unity with nature, may be given—the passage about the boy on Windermere, who

> "Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls
> That they might answer him ; and they would shout
> Across the watery vale and shout again
> Responsive to his call, with quivering peals
> And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
> Redoubled and redoubled ; concourse wild
> Of jocund din. And when there came a pause
> Of silence, such as baffled his best skill,
> Then sometimes in that silence, while he hung
> Loitering, *a gentle shock of mild surprise*
> *Has carried far into his heart the voice*
> *Of mountain torrents* ; or the visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind,
> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
> Into the bosom of the steady lake."

Such passages—and many more remarkable might be quoted—cannot be read without a "gentle shock of mild surprise" at the coincidence or correspondence of inward and outward, as at the sudden appearance of a friend's face under a

strange disguise. By such electric strokes, even more than by the direct expression of his poetic creed, though that also is not wanting, Wordsworth makes us feel that it is one spirit that speaks in man and nature, and that, therefore, the poet's vision is no mere playing with metaphors, but a real discovery of "a presence far more deeply interfused." The poet, with trembling and watchful sensibility, seems to stand between the worlds, and catches the faintest sounds of recognition that are carried from one to the other.

> "Hark! it is the mountain echo,
> Solitary, clear, profound,
> Answering to the shouting cuckoo,
> Giving to her sound for sound.
> Such rebounds the inward ear
> Catches sometimes from afar—
> Listen, ponder, hold them dear,
> For of God, of God they are."

Again, if for Wordsworth there is no absolute division between man and the material world, if for him "sun, moon, and stars all struggle in the toils of mortal sympathy," it was to be expected that his eye would be keen to detect the links of unity, the correspondences, that connect man more directly with living creatures.

The daisy and the celandine, the broom and the thorn, are for him living friends and companions. To him "the meanest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," though characteristically he speaks almost exclusively of the *wild* flowers, and he has little to say about the cultured beauties of the garden. And the same spirit makes him keen to detect and express the secret bonds of sympathy that grow up between man and the animals that stand nearest to him, especially the dog and the horse. The mystic charm of the *White Doe of Rylstone* lies in the way in which the doe, without transgressing the bounds of its natural life, is yet lifted up into the sphere of human sorrow and human sympathy. In *Peter Bell* Wordsworth even tries—with partial success—to change the current of ordinary associations by making the ass the means of awaking the voice of humanity in the man.

2. This tendency of Wordsworth to "penetrate the lofty and the low," however, leads us to notice the second point of connection between his ideas and those of Rousseau. Rousseau's vindication of the dignity of the life of peasants,

as containing in it the opportunity, and even the best opportunity, for the exercise of all the higher powers of human nature, found an instant sympathetic echo in the breast of the poet of the lakes. And there was something even in the one-sided hatred of "luxury," characteristic of Rousseau, which was not altogether repugnant to Wordsworth. Reared among a race of simple, though not untrained or ignorant, rustics of strong self-respecting character, Wordsworth cared little for any but those primary spiritual interests of human life, which seemed to him to be as fully secured in his native hills as anywhere. The doctrine that the worth of man's life is not to be measured by differences of culture any more than by differences of rank or wealth, was to him an easily learnt lesson. In fact, he tells us that in this respect the principles of the Revolution seemed to him almost axiomatic.

> "If at the first great outbreak I rejoiced
> Less than might well befit my youth, the cause
> In part lay here, that unto me the events
> Seemed nothing out of nature's certain course—
> A gift that was come rather late than soon."

But in Wordsworth's mind the doctrine was

deprived of the baser ingredients of fanatical bitterness and envy, which so often tainted the assertion of the essential equality of men in Rousseau and his followers. Wordsworth had too genuine a belief in the superiority of a life of simple cares and pleasures to feel any such bitterness; he was tempted rather to pity than to envy those who diverged from his ideal of "plain living and high thinking." The levelling spirit of the Revolution, therefore, appears in him in a purified form, as a belief that "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty."

Yet, after all, the one-sidedness of the revolutionary spirit has not quite disappeared in Wordsworth: it shows itself in the set bent of his mind to exalt that which the world has generally despised or neglected. When he declared in one of his earliest poems that

> "He who feels contempt for any living thing,
> Hath faculties which he hath never used,"

he was expressing a thought which is never far from his mind, and which frequently shows itself in his selection of subjects. The world of polite literature was scandalised in his own day—and

it can scarcely be said to have ceased yet to be scandalised—by his choice of pedlars and waggoners, peasants and beggars, for the heroes and protagonists of his verse; but to Wordsworth such a choice was almost inevitable. As Mr. Morley says that Rousseau would not have been Rousseau, "if he had felt it shameful or derogatory" to marry a kitchen wench; so we may fairly assert that Wordsworth would not have been Wordsworth, if he had not thought a leech-gatherer a better hero than a king. His constant tendency to assert the sanctity, the essential nobility and poetic beauty of modes of life, feelings, and interests, to which superficial associations—and sometimes even associations that are not quite superficial—of degradation and meanness are usually attached, is seen in poems like *Peter Bell*, *The Idiot Boy*, *Goody Blake and Harry Gill*, etc. Even one who is a most orthodox believer in the Wordsworthian creed, and who has tried to follow it in purging his mind of all artificial associations, may feel his faith falter at some of these performances.

Yet we need not suppose that they were the result of any conscious determination in Words-

worth to write up to a particular theory. He tells us, indeed, in one of his prefaces, that "humble and rustic life was generally chosen" for the subject of his verse, "because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity, and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended and more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature."[1] But this theory was developed *ex post facto* as the vindication of a practice which had flowed in the first instance from the natural tendencies of his mind.

We may regret the exaggeration, the human "too much," which, in cases like those above

[1] *Poems*, vi. p. 308.

mentioned, repels many from Wordsworth, or prevents them from duly estimating his genius; but it must be clear to every careful reader that it would be impossible to separate this element from his poems without taking away at the same time that which gives them their characteristic power. A tone of sentiment which is half-democratic and half-Christian, and which will not tolerate any monopolies of good, is present in all his greater poems, and, indeed it breaks from his lips almost unconsciously at every turn. For him, poetry, wisdom, heroism, are the common property of mankind: all the deeper experiences of life are those that belong to every one; and even "pleasure is spread through the earth in stray gifts, to be claimed by whoever shall find."[1] In his treatment of the question of education Wordsworth sometimes reminds us of Rousseau's attack upon art and science, so firmly is he convinced that the "substantial things" are within the reach of every one, and that all we get by wider culture scarcely compensates for that unsettling of the natural balance of mind which culture often brings with it.

Even his æsthetic theory, to which we have

[1] Cf. *Poems*, iii. 75; v. 373-4; vi. 13.

already referred, that poetry is only a selection of the "language of real life," and is inferior to that language at its best, springs from the same root. He is so determined to correct the error of those

> "Who, while they most ambitiously set forth
> Extrinsic differences, the outward marks
> Whereby society has parted man
> From man, *neglect the universal heart*,"

that he will scarcely admit the existence of any differences which affect the spiritual life at all, if it be not a difference *in favour* of those who lead the simplest life. Mr. Hutton, in his criticism upon Wordsworth, has spoken of his "spiritual frugality" in making the most of every simple occasion, and refraining from any waste of the sources of emotion; but the secret of this frugality is Wordsworth's belief that there is little difference between small and great occasions, and that, if we cannot find the greatest meanings in the most familiar experiences, we will find them nowhere.

> "Long have I loved what I behold—
> The night that calms, the day that cheers;
> The common growth of mother-earth
> Suffices me—her tears and mirth,
> Her humblest mirth and tears.

These given, what more need I desire
To stir, to soothe, to elevate,
What nobler marvels than the mind
May in life's daily prospect find,
May find, or there create?"

3. The deepest source of this love of simple things is that faith in man, in each man, and all men, which was also the animating principle of Rousseau. Even Rousseau, however, was not a pure individualist, but based the greatness of the individual on the fact that the *raison commune* speaks within him, and that he can be made into an organ of the *volonté générale.* And Wordsworth, who had, as was to be expected, a much deeper apprehension of this truth, tells us in the *Prelude* that he found the explanation of the immediate failure of the French Revolution in the fact that the Revolutionists forgot the unity of humanity and the continuity of its development. In the first enthusiasm of his youthful Republicanism, he had hoped to see

"The man to come parted as by a gulf
From him who had been."

But his disappointment taught him to

"Trust the elevation which had made him one
With the great family that still survives

> To illuminate the abyss of ages past,
> Sage, warrior, prophet, hero."

And to believe that there is

> "One great society alone on earth,
> The noble living and the noble dead."

And the effect of this belief in the solidarity of man, was shown in Wordsworth's intense sympathy with the *national* struggles of Spain and Germany against Napoleon. Yet, on the whole, we have to admit that this idea did not carry him very far. He apprehended it, but it did not *possess* him as he was possessed by the ideas we have already mentioned. He is not the poet of the unity and the progress of humanity; perhaps the poet whom that idea shall inspire has yet to arise. What Wordsworth, like Rousseau, loves to speak of is rather the power and dignity of the individual man, and how he can attain to "freedom in himself" under all circumstances.

The *Prelude*, in which Wordsworth gives an account of his own spiritual development, is one of the numerous echoes of the *Confessions* of Rousseau; but it is an echo in which the morbid and unhealthy self-analysis of the *Confessions* has

all but disappeared, and in which the interest of the reader is claimed on grounds which are all but independent of the mere individual. Wordsworth seeks to exhibit to us, not so much of his own personal career, as the way in which, amid the difficulties of the time, a human soul might find peace and inward freedom. He rejects any claim to exceptional privilege, and takes his stand upon the rights of simple humanity.

> "There's not a man
> That lives, who hath not known his godlike hours
> And feels not what an empire we inherit,
> As natural beings in the strength of nature!"

He bids us find a confirmation of our spiritual destiny even in the childish appetite for wonder.

> "Our childhood sits,
> Our simple childhood sits upon a throne,
> That hath more power than all the elements."

And the highest effect of natural grandeur of the glories of the Alps, for him, is that it makes us conscious that

> "Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
> Is with infinitude, and only there;
> With hope it is, hope that can never die,
> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something ever more about to be!"

Lastly, out of this sense of the spiritual greatness, the "godhead" of human nature, springs what we might call, in philosophical terms, the optimism of Wordsworth—his assertion that good is stronger than evil, and even that the latter is but a means of the development of the former. "The godhead which is ours," he says, "can never utterly be shamed or stilled," and

> "The immortal spirit, with godlike power,
> Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
> That time can lay upon her."

Wordsworth's optimism, if it may be so called, has no fear of sorrow or of evil. He can stand in the shadow of death and pain, ruin and failure, with a sympathy that is almost painful in its quiet intensity; yet the sense "of something far more deeply interfused" which makes "our noisy years seem moments in the being of the eternal silence"; the faith in the omnipotence "of love and man's unconquerable mind," is never destroyed or even weakened in him. The contemplation of evil and pain always ends with him, by an inevitable recoil, in an inspired expression of his faith in the good which transmutes and transfigures it, as clouds are changed into manifestations

of the sunlight they strive to hide. It is this spiritual recoil against the pressure of evil that draws from Wordsworth some of the loftiest and purest notes which his music ever reached, notes in which the minor tones of sorrow are made the means of expressing a deeper joy :—

"Sighing, I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near—
A ritual hymn,
Chanted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim."

THE PROBLEM OF PHILOSOPHY AT THE PRESENT TIME.[1]

IN complying with the request which you have done me the honour to make, to deliver the introductory address to this Society, I think that, instead of treating of any special philosophical subject, it will be more profitable to make some general remarks on the nature and objects of the study to which the Society is devoted. I propose, therefore, to say something as to the general problem of philosophy, and the special forms which that problem has taken in recent times. In doing so, it will not be possible for me to avoid an appearance of dogmatism, as I must make some assertions which are much disputed, the objections to which I shall not have

[1] An Introductory Address, delivered to the Philosophical Society of the University of Edinburgh, 1881.

time to discuss. But instead of interpolating any cheap formulas of modesty, I venture simply to make this apology once for all, and to ask you to adopt, for the time, a point of view which may not be your own. Afterwards you can avenge yourselves for this temporary submission by subjecting my words to what criticism you think fit. A philosophic temper is shown, above all things, in the power of entering into the views of another, and taking them for the moment almost as if they were your own, without prejudice to the subsequent critical reaction, which will be effective just in proportion to the degree of your previous sympathetic appreciation of the ideas criticised.

What, then, is the task of philosophy? What is its task in general, and how is that task modified by the circumstances of the present time? To the first of these questions, I answer that, stated in very general terms, the task of philosophy is to gain, or rather perhaps to regain, such a view of things as shall reconcile us to the world and to ourselves. The need for philosophy arises out of the broken harmony of a spiritual life, in which the different elements or factors seem to be set in irreconcilable opposition to each other; in which,

for example, the religious consciousness, the consciousness of the infinite, is at war with the secular consciousness, the consciousness of the finite; or again, the consciousness of the self, with the consciousness of the external world. It is easy to see this, if we reflect on the nature of the controversies which most trouble us at present. They all, directly or indirectly, turn upon the difficulty of reconciling the three great terms of thought,—the world, self, and God: the difficulty of carrying out to their legitimate consequences what seem to be our most firmly based convictions as to any one of these factors in our intellectual life, without rejecting in whole or in part the claims of the others.

Thus, for example, many writers in the present time find it impossible to admit the truth and solidity of the principles and methods of physical science in relation to the material world, without extending their application beyond that world. Yet, if we make this extension, and treat these methods and principles as universal, we inevitably reduce consciousness, thought, and will, to the level of physical phenomena, and make even their existence an insoluble problem. Others, again, find

it difficult to assert the truth, that the consciousness of self enters into all our experience, without reducing that experience to a series of states of the individual soul. And others, like Mr. Spencer and Professor Huxley, poised between these two conflicting currents of thought, have adopted the odd, and we might even say irrational, expedient of telling us that we may regard the world *either* as a collection of the phenomena of mind, *or* as a collection of the phenomena of matter, but that we can never bring these two ways of looking at things together—a view which supposes man to be afflicted with a kind of intellectual *strabismus*, so that he can never see with one of his mental eyes without shutting the other. Again, looking beyond this conflict of materialism and subjective idealism, the intellectual unity of our life is disturbed by the opposition of the consciousness of the infinite to the consciousness of the finite. To many of our scientific men it seems axiomatic that all our real knowledge is of that which belongs to the context of a finite experience, and that all religious and metaphysical efforts to reach beyond the finite are attempts to think the unknown and unknowable. Yet such men often feel strongly the need, and,

from their point of view, the extreme difficulty, of finding anything to give to the moral life of man that support which was once found in the belief that these dreams are realities. On the other hand, there are not a few men in our day,—like the hero of that remarkable little book called *Mark Rutherford*,—men whose very life is in religious ideas, yet who have imbibed from the literature of the time a conviction that such ideas must be illusory, and who therefore dwell, as it were, in a world of eclipse and paralysis, neither able to find a faith nor to do without one, sitting

> "by the poisoned springs of life,
> Waiting for the morrow that shall free them from the strife."

Now, it is impossible, so long as our ultimate thought of the world is thus in discord with itself, that our lives should be what human lives have sometimes been—impossible that we should rise to that energy of undivided will and affection, that free play of concentrated intelligence, that sense of the infinite resources of the spirit that moves us, out of which the highest achievements of men at all times have sprung. Nor, after the unity of our first instinctive faith has been broken by

difficulties such as those I have mentioned, is it possible entirely to recover it, except by some kind of philosophical reflection. Bacon said that in the last period of ancient civilisation philosophy took the place of religion, and the same is to some extent true now. In face of the modern spirit of criticism, it is rarely possible for educated men, and for students of philosophy it is impossible, to rest for the entire support of their spiritual life upon the simple intuitions of faith. For them the age of unconsciousness is past, and they must call in the aid of reflection, if it were only to heal the wounds of reflection itself. As the builders of the second Temple had to work with arms by their side, so, in our day, those who seek either to maintain, or to replace, the old Christian synthesis of life, must provide themselves with the weapons of philosophy. It is not of our own choice that we have been born in an age of criticism; but being here, and being by our education brought face to face with all the prevalent currents of thought, we have only two alternatives before us; we must face our difficulties, or we must suppress them. Do we resolve to suppress them?—we see often enough what kind of moral temper comes of *that*,—the fevered

fanatical spirit that founds its faith on the impossibility of knowing anything, and determines to believe, because it dare not do otherwise. Yet, if we are not content with such faith, we must seek the reconciliation of the contradictory elements of our consciousness in some new reflective synthesis, in other words, in philosophy.

The task of philosophy then, I repeat, is to rise to such a general view of things as shall reconcile us, or enable us to reconcile ourselves, to the world and to ourselves. This vague statement, however, might easily be admitted by many who will be startled and repelled when we draw out its meaning. For it means no less than this, that philosophy, by the very condition of its life, is forced to attempt what Comtists have called an "objective," or what perhaps might more properly be termed an "absolute" synthesis. It is true that many philosophers, and even great philosophers, have tried to evade this necessity, and to narrow the problem of philosophy within limits which made its solution seem easier. Especially in times of transition, when social bonds have become relaxed, and religious faith has been weakened or destroyed, philosophy also has generally lowered its claims, and

has been content to abandon the great world to chaos, if only it could secure some little cosmos of its own. To these causes of diffidence in philosophy others in recent times have been added; for our very widening knowledge of the universe has thrown a shadow of suspicion upon the attempt to measure it, and has inclined us to narrow our views to a solution of the problem of human life, and to disconnect it from the problem of the unity of all things. Can we not, it is natural to ask, find a meaning in our own lives without spelling out the secret of the universe? Can we not build our fragile houses of mortality on something less than an eternal foundation? With the growth of our knowledge grows also the consciousness of our ignorance, and more and more the latter seems to reduce the former into something merely relative and transitional. Looking out upon the wide sea of knowledge, with some measure of appreciation of its extent, it seemed but reasonable for one like Comte to say, that an "objective synthesis," a systematic view of the world as a whole, was beyond the reach of man; and that, if his life was to be brought into harmony with itself on a basis of knowledge, he must content himself with a

"subjective synthesis," a synthesis which leaves out all speculation in relation to the greater whole of the universe, and attempts only to gather knowledge to a focus in the interests of man.

In taking up this position, Comte, it has been urged by his followers, showed a true insight into our needs as rational beings, who must desire to bring our lives into harmony and unity with themselves, and to found that harmony and unity upon an intelligent view of the facts of our condition; and he showed at the same time a right appreciation of the limits which are set around us as finite creatures, standing in the face of a universe, the ultimate meaning of which is hidden from us by the weakness of our mental capacity and the narrowness of our opportunities.

Comte's view of things is thus based upon two incontrovertible facts—the limitation of man's powers and the imperative wants of his moral being. The old aspiring religious and philosophical synthesis, he argues, has been discredited for ever by our knowledge of the immensity of the universe and of our own feebleness. It is impossible for the creature of a day to see things *sub specie æternitatis*, for a finite mind to carry back the infinity of the

universe to its central principle, to view it as a harmonious system, and, like God, to pronounce it "very good." But yet there remains the inextinguishable requirement of a rational and moral nature to rise above chance impulses and energies, and to find some one guiding principle of thought and action which shall make his life harmonious with itself. And this principle, since we cannot find it in an Absolute, whom we do *not* know, we must find in man—man individual, or man social—whom we *do* know. Renouncing, therefore, all questions as to the system of the universe, even the question whether it *is* a system, we can still draw back upon ourselves and find and produce system and harmony in our own lives. Or, if this is impossible for us as regards the fragmentary existence of the individual, we may yet detect in the history of the human race a tendency towards unity and organisation, to which all the great and good of the past have contributed, and we may give value and completeness to our individual lives by making them the instruments of this "increasing purpose."

The question which Comte thus brings home to us is, as I have already indicated, not a new one.

It is the question whether it is possible to have a religion—*i.e.*, "a free convergence of all man's affections and energies" to one object, without a God; and a philosophy, *i.e.*, a synthesis or gathering to one focus of all knowledge, without an Absolute.[1] And this is a question that has been raised more or less distinctly in every era of transition, when the "native hue" of human resolution has been "sicklied o'er with a pale cast of thought," and when men have been fain to gather up the fragments that remained in the shipwreck of their greater faiths and hopes. The individualism of the Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics, for example, corresponding as it did with the decay of ancient religion and social morality, was in great measure a result of such a temper of mind. As men gave up the hope of organising their own social relations, and of understanding the world as an intelligible order, they fell back upon the idea of an inner life, which might maintain harmony with itself in the face even of an outward chaos. Philosophy, it began to be said, is needed, not to penetrate into the secret of the world, which is impenetrable, but to teach

[1] Cf. *The Unity of Comte's Life and Doctrine*, by J. H. Bridges. London: Trübner & Co., 1866.

us our limits and to make us content with them. *Tecum habita et noris quam sit tibi curta supellex.* Yet that *curta supellex* is enough; the peace of inward unity may be attained, even if we know nothing and can do nothing in the world without. Sure of nothing else, the individual may be sure of himself, and in the strength of a mind centred and at rest in itself, may cease to concern himself with things that can only touch the outward life.

Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

Now, I need not dwell on the self-contradiction of this extreme of "subjective" synthesis, in which all that is without is abandoned to chaos or uncertainty, in order that the integrity of the inner life may be preserved. It is a commonplace of philosophy that we cannot thus withdraw into ourselves and leave the world to wander its own wise or unwise way, inasmuch as the two terms thus separated by abstraction are essentially united, and our experience of the world *is* our experience of ourselves. The life of reason or consciousness is essentially a life that goes beyond itself, and in which the inward cannot be absolutely fenced off from the outward without itself ceasing

to have any meaning or content. It is a life of *knowledge*, in which we can know ourselves, only as we know the universe of which, as individuals, we form a part. It is a life of *action*, in which we can realise ourselves, only by becoming the servants of an end which is being realised in the world. Concentrate consciousness entirely upon itself, and its unreflected light will cease to shine. The world without and the world within are not two separate worlds, but necessary counterparts of each other; and, just in the extent to which we succeed in withdrawing from the world without, we narrow the world within.

The attitude, therefore, of the Stoic or Sceptic who turns away from a world which he surrenders to chaos and unreason, or in which, at least, he gives up the hope of seeing or producing any rational order, and who seeks thus to find all truth and happiness within, is essentially irrational. He is striving to realise in isolation a life whose essential characteristic is community. He is seeking to save the life of the seed, which must be cast into the ground and die, that it may live, by keeping it shut up from all external influences. For the Christian law of self-sacrifice,

"he that would save his life must lose it," is nothing more than the transcription into terms of morality of that which is the general law of spiritual life—a life whose riches are always for the individual exactly measured by the extent to which he breaks down the limits of a self-centred individuality, to find himself again in the larger existence of the whole.

But if this be the case, and if it is impossible to solve the problem of the inner life without solving the apparently wider problem of the outer life, or to base on a purely subjective synthesis a reconciliation of the spirit with itself, such as was formerly based on the objective synthesis of religion or philosophy, equally impossible is it to draw any other absolute line of division, such, for example, as that between the life of the nation and the life of humanity, or again, between the life of humanity and the course of nature. In every similar division we are separating elements so correlated that the meaning of each one of them begins to evaporate so soon as we realise what we have done in separating it from the rest. To make such an abstraction must introduce a fatal discord between the practical life of man, and the facts upon

which we pretend to base it. And indeed, as I think can be shown in the case of Comte, such an attempt involves the self-deception of treating that as absolute and divine, which we at the same time admit to be uncertain and transitory.[1] How, for example, can we make a God out of humanity, if we think of mankind as a race of beings which is not really organic, but in which there is only a general tendency to organisation, a tendency, which again is subjected to an immeasurable external contingency? Comte's attempt to escape the great difficulties which confessedly beset an optimistic creed—the creed that in some way all things work together for good—by thus falling back from the assertion of system in the universe, to the assertion of system only in the life of man, like most compromises, unites all the difficulties of both extremes it would avoid; the difficulties of an absolute philosophy, which seems to go beyond the limits of human knowledge, and the difficulties of a scepticism, which leaves the moral and intellectual life of man without a principle of unity. The Stoic or Sceptic who

[1] I have attempted to show this in my book on *The Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte.*

bids us concentrate ourselves on our own soul, and the Positivist, who bids us worship humanity, are equally bidding us treat a part, which we can know and understand only as a part, as if it were the whole. They are attempting to break in one place only the indivisible unity of the intelligence and the intelligible world; but if that unity be broken in one place it is wholly destroyed. *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus.* For it is a unity which is not like a particular hypothesis, that may be asserted or denied without detriment to the rest of our knowledge, but it is *the* hypothesis, if we may so call it, which is implied in all knowledge whatever, the hypothesis which constitutes our rational being. Hence Kant showed a true sense of the conditions of philosophical synthesis, when he said that, if it could be shown that there was one metaphysical problem with which his *Critique of Pure Reason* was incompetent to deal, it must be regarded as an entire failure. If philosophy is incapable of a universal synthesis, it cannot make any synthesis at all. If it admit any absolute division, whether between the ego and the non-ego, or between man and nature, or even between the finite and infinite, it is driven of

necessity into scepticism. Unless it reconciles us with the universe, it cannot even reconcile us with ourselves. The present is a time in which there are many voices to welcome the well-known saying of Pope:

> "Know well thyself, presume not God to scan,
> The proper study of mankind is man";

but the simple, yet demonstrable answer to such partial Agnosticism is, that if we cannot, in the sense I have indicated, know God, we cannot know anything.

But if this be so, if we cannot give up the idea of a universal synthesis, without practically giving up philosophy altogether, we must not hide from ourselves the enormous difficulties with which philosophy has to contend, difficulties which seem to grow every day with our increasing knowledge of man and of the world in which he lives. For all this knowledge seems to be making wider and wider the division between the individual and the universal, between the vision of short-sighted, changeable creatures such as men seem to be, and the all-embracing whole. These difficulties, however, though they by no means

disappear, yet somewhat change their character when we consider that the work of philosophy is not in the first instance constructive, but rather critical and reconstructive; that its business is not to seek for something transcendent, some hypothesis as to things hitherto unknown and alien to our experience, but rather to bring to light the hypothesis, if we choose to call it so, on which our rational being is founded. Philosophy must necessarily seem to be something extravagant and wildly ambitious to any one who does not discern that the problem it would solve is not one which arbitrarily, or as a matter merely of curiosity, we *choose* to solve, but one which we have in some way been solving, or of which we have been presupposing the solution, at every moment of our lives. To rise from the finite to the infinite would be impossible, if the consciousness of the infinite were not already involved in the consciousness of the finite, and developed along with it. Philosophy is not a first venture into a new field of thought, but the re-thinking of a secular and religious consciousness, which has been developed, in the main, independently of philosophy. It was the great work of Kant

to show that experience itself is possible only through the necessity and universality of thought. But in thus proving the relativity of the finite objects of experience to the intelligence (which is not itself such an object), he really showed,—though without himself being fully conscious of it, and almost, we might say, against his will,—that we cannot admit the validity of the empirical consciousness without admitting the validity of the consciousness of that which, in the narrower sense of the word, is beyond experience.

Hence, to one who follows out the Kantian principles to their legitimate result, it becomes impossible to treat the objective synthesis of religion as the illusion of a finite mind trying to stretch itself beyond its proper limits. The religious takes its place beside the secular consciousness, the consciousness of the infinite beside the consciousness of the finite world, as the consciousness of a real object, or rather of the ultimate reality upon which everything else rests. And philosophy, in dealing with the one as with the other, is discharged from the absurd and impossible feat of finding its way into a transcendent region beyond all consciousness and experience.

In both cases, in relation to the infinite as in relation to the finite world, the work of philosophy goes beyond the primary unreflected consciousness of man only in this aspect, that it brings that consciousness to a deeper understanding of itself. In both we have a right to begin our task of criticism and reconstruction with a faith in the great work achieved in and by the spirit of man in the past; and we ought to begin it with the consciousness that *our* criticism and reconstruction can have value only as a continuation of that work. For it is this consciousness that alone can justifiably raise us above the feeling of our own weakness for the task which is laid upon philosophy in our time, and can save us from the intruding suspicion, that in his religions and his philosophies man has been perpetually renewing the history of Babel—attempting to build a tower that shall reach to heaven, only to find the work again and again stopped by the confusion of languages among the builders. If, therefore, philosophy may be described as a critical reconstruction of belief, we must recollect that this reconstruction, from a higher point of view, is merely development; or, to put it more simply, we must remember that, in philosophy

as in other things, the hope of mankind for the future must be a vain illusion, unless it can reasonably be based on a deep reverence for the past.

In the "Faust" of Goethe, the poet who of all others has most deeply fathomed and expressed the conflict of the modern spirit with itself—though it may perhaps be said that, like a physician strong in diagnosis but not in therapeutics, he often stops at the description of disease, and finds his own poetic deliverance from it simply in thus describing it[1]—we find some words that may be applied to the work of philosophy. When Faust utters all his despair of life in that comprehensive curse in which he disowns every faith, and even every illusion that has hitherto supported mankind, the chorus of spirits breaks in with a song, in which lament over what has been lost is mingled with a far-off hint of the only possible restoration—

[1] "Physician of the iron age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear,
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: "*Thou ailest here, and here!*"

Arnold's Poems, Memorial Verses, April, 1850.

"Woe, woe, thou hast destroyed it,
The beautiful world,
With mighty blow;
It trembles it falls to ruins.
A Demigod hath broken it down.
We bear away the ruins into nothingness,
And lament over the lost beauty."

And then the song goes on—

"Mighty One
Of the sons of earth,
With greater majesty
Build it up,
In thine own soul build it up again;
A new course of life
Begin,
With fresh unclouded sense,
And let new songs rise
In place of those that are silenced."

"In thine own soul build it up again,"—this is the ever-repeated call to philosophy at all times, such as the present, when the first unity of faith and reason is disturbed. But the task has become, if in some respects a harder, yet in other respects a more hopeful one in modern times. That this is so may be shown by a short comparison of the form in which the problem presented itself to Plato and Aristotle, with the form in which it presents itself to us. In Plato's *Republic,* we

find an attempt to "build up again in the soul" of the philosopher the falling edifice of Greek civilisation, to restore its religious and political life, by going back to the ideal principle on which it rested. But the difficulty of such restoration lay in this, that the first intuitive synthesis of Greece was a synthesis of the imagination, in which that which was essentially limited and national was treated as unlimited and universal. Greek morality did not look beyond the boundary of the nation, seldom even beyond the boundary of the civic state. Greek religion, as it was an apotheosis of the special gifts of the Greek genius, was in some measure a consecration of the national spirit of exclusion. Hence, neither religion nor morality could offer an effective resistance to the disintegrating power of reflection. As it was mainly the poetic imagination which had peopled Olympus with the fair humanities of the gods, the power of Greek religion disappeared almost as soon as the people became capable of distinguishing poetry from prose. And as, in the ethical life of the Greek state, the local and temporal was rather confused than reconciled with that which is universal, it fell an easy prey to the casuistry of

the Sophists. On the other hand the scepticism of the Sophists remained superficial and rhetorical, just because it found so little power of resistance in the institutions which it attacked. When, therefore, philosophy in Plato and Aristotle set itself to the task of reconstructing the synthesis upon which the moral and intellectual life of Greece was founded, and restoring the broken harmony of faith and reason, its reconciliation was necessarily imperfect, because of the imperfection of the positive and negative elements which it sought to reconcile. It tried to combine the freedom of thought, which had shown itself in the Sophistic movement, with the substantial contents of Greek life, morality, and religion, which Sophistry had rejected. But the freedom and universality of thought was in essential conflict with the limited character of the contents; and even to Plato himself a merely imaginative religion could not be more than a "noble lie," *i.e.*, a truth veiled under an inadequate sensuous form. The element of philosophy in which the reconciliation was attempted, was itself fatal to the reconciliation aimed at. Hence already in Plato we find the beginning of that

withdrawal into the inner life from an unideal world, which was carried out in subsequent philosophy, and which of necessity ended in the self-contradiction of scepticism.

The modern movement from faith to reason bears a striking analogy to the movement of ancient thought. Yet there are important differences, which make the struggle of tendencies in modern times harder and more obstinate, but which also for that very reason enable us to anticipate a more satisfactory result. Here, too, we have a system of religion apprehended by the intuitive consciousness of faith, and manifesting itself in definite forms of intellectual and social life. Here, too, we have the spirit of reflection after a time awakening and subjecting the whole religious system, as well as all the institutions founded upon it, to a searching, and often a destructive criticism. And here, too, we find philosophy attempting to restore the broken harmony of man's consciousness of himself and of the world, by separating the permanent from the transitory elements of his earlier faith. But, beneath this general similarity of development there are many points of contrast: which we

may roughly sum up by saying that the first synthesis of Christendom took the form of a religion which was not national but universal, and that the negative movement against it has been not merely analytic and sophistic, but also scientific, and, therefore, within certain limits, constructive. Hence, also, just because of the deeper spiritual meaning and fuller development of the two seemingly opposed powers that divide our life, we have some reason to think that it may be possible to combine what is good in both, and to attain to a philosophical synthesis, which may be not merely provisional but of permanent value for mankind. Let me say a few more words on each of these points.

The religion of Greece was, as I have said, national, not universal, and for that very reason it was essentially a religion of the artistic imagination; for it is the imagination which lifts the part into a whole, and makes a particular into a substitute for the universal. It has been called an anthropomorphic religion; but, as Hegel has remarked, in the higher sense it was not anthropomorphic enough,—it lifted some human qualities into the divine, but not humanity itself as such.

Its gods were ideal figures, humanised rather than human, fixed like statues in the eternal repose of beauty, and lifted above all the narrowing conditions of human life. Christianity, on the other hand, brought down the divine into the form of an individual life lived under those conditions, struggling with the wants and pains of mortality and the opposition of fellow mortals, and undergoing and accepting the common lot of renunciation, sorrow, and death. It thus idealised, not choice specimens of intelligence and valour, but humanity itself, in its simplest and humblest form of life. It taught the world not to regard the ideal as something which a few elect spirits might reach, by escaping from the commonplace of existence, but to find it in the commonplace itself; to make the limits of mortality the means of freedom, and to turn pain, death, and even evil into forms of the manifestation of good. Now this optimism on the very basis of pessimism, whose Christ has "descended into hell," this idealisation of ordinary reality as it stands without selection or change, just because it was *this*, was no religion of phantasy, of art, of the poetic imagination merely. It did not

flinch from the facts of life, however dark and threatening, or seek to turn its eyes to some earthly paradise lifted above the clouds and the winds. Art in it was secondary, not primary; in its poetry truth was bursting through the sensuous veil. And from this it necessarily follows that it is not a dream that vanishes with a waking of the prosaic consciousness in either of its shapes, either as the distinct common-sense apprehension of fact, or as the reflective analysis of thought. Whatever changes of form, therefore, it has been, and may yet be subjected to (and I do not say that these will be small), the Christian view of the world in its essence is based upon such a simple acknowledgment of the truth and reality of things, that it need not fear overthrow, even from our widening knowledge of the facts of life, or from the deeper self-consciousness to which reflection is gradually bringing us. In the midst even of apparent rejection, its ideals have maintained and increased their hold over the emancipated intelligence of Europe, and its fundamental conception of life penetrates and moulds the social and religious speculations of those who,

like Comte, seem to have most thoroughly renounced it.

On the other hand, if the first intuitional basis of modern life is thus strong in itself, strong too, it must be acknowledged, are the powers that assail it. The sophistic culture that undermined the old beliefs of Greece, and the morality founded upon them, was but a feeble solvent, compared with the disintegrating force of negative reflection and scientific criticism, to which *our* faiths are subjected. The boldness of the ancient sceptic was chilled by a sense of the weakness of his own position. He might set the human against the divine, the individual against the State, the finite and relative against the infinite and absolute; but he was paralysed by the negative character of his own teaching, by the consciousness that his emancipation of the intellect was a process whereby it was emptied of all contents, and that his liberation of the individual from limited social bonds could lead to nothing better than anarchy. In modern times, on the other hand, it has ceased to be so. The world of finite interests and objects has rounded itself, as it were, into a separate whole, within which the mind of man can fortify

itself, and live *securus adversus deos*, in independence of the infinite. In the sphere of *thought*, there has been forming itself an ever-increasing body of science, which, tracing out the relation of finite things to finite things, never finds it necessary to seek for a beginning or an end to its infinite series of phenomena, and which meets the claims of theology with the saying of the astronomer, "I do not need that hypothesis." In the sphere of *action*, again, the complexity of modern life presents a thousand isolated interests, crossing each other in ways too subtle to trace out—interests commercial, social, and political—in pursuing one or other of which the individual may find ample occupation for his existence, without ever feeling the need of any return upon himself, or seeing any reason to ask himself whether this endless striving has any meaning or object beyond itself. Nor need we wonder that the prevailing school of philosophy is one that renounces all such questions as vain, and bids us be content to know that we can know nothing. The very wealth of modern life and science, both because it makes the ultimate synthesis more difficult, and because it supplies us with such

a fulness of interests independent of that synthesis tends to drive us back to the old simple Agnostic philosophy of the Persian poet, Omar Khayyam:—

"Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and sage, and heard great argument
About it and about, but evermore
Came out by the same door that in I went.

"With them the seed of wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the harvest that I reaped;
I came like water, and like wind I go.

"There was a door to which I found no key,
There was a veil through which I could not see.
Some little talk awhile of Me and Thee
There was: and then no more of Thee and Me."

The Agnosticism and Secularism of these latter days, however, has a far deeper meaning than that which we can attribute to the verses of Omar Khayyam, or to any similar phase of opinion in past time. It is like in expression, —as, indeed, in the first aspect of them, all negations seem to be much alike. But, just as the ordinary commonplaces about the sorrows and trials of life have a greater significance when they fall from the lips of age and experience, than when they are merely the utterance

of the first dawning thoughtfulness of youth; so our modern Agnosticism implies a deeper consciousness of the problem of human existence than could possibly have been attained by Omar Khayyam. For it is based, not on a mere Epicurean concentration upon the individual life, nor on the materialism of passion, but on our knowledge of the greatness of the universe, and on the complexity of finite interests, both practical and scientific, which seem to stand on their own merits, and to need no reference to anything higher, in order to recommend them as sufficient objects of our lives.

A consideration of these two main elements of modern thought enables us to understand why the struggle of positive and negative tendencies—of the consciousness of the infinite with the consciousness of the finite, of the religious with the secular spirit—should be so much more violent and protracted than the analogous conflict in earlier times. A religion which is universal and not merely imaginative, and a reflection which is scientific, and not merely analytic or destructive, are each of them charged with interests vital to man; and, so long as they are opposed as enemies,

they are necessarily involved in a contest which is incapable of being decided by any final victory on one side or the other. Man, as he has an understanding, cannot but acknowledge the facts of his finite life, and in view of them he must sooner or later withdraw his allegiance from every ideal that does not prove itself to be real, and renounce every belief which is found inconsistent with the laws of thought or the nature of experience. Yet, on the other hand, as he is a self-conscious being, who knows the world in relation to the self, and who therefore cannot but realise more or less distinctly the unity of all things with each other and with the mind that knows them, he must equally reject any attempt to confine him to the finite world. Nor, however he may seek, in accordance with imperfect theories of knowledge, to limit himself to that world, can he ever really succeed in confining his thoughts within it. All our knowledge of the things of time is, so to speak, on the background of eternity itself. The scientific impulse itself presupposes the presence in our own minds of an idea of truth as the ultimate unity of being and knowing, which in all our inquiries into the laws of the universe

we can only develop and verify. For it is just because we are obscurely conscious, even from the beginning, of this unity that we regard every apparent discord of things with each other as a mystery and a problem, and so are continually seeking law and unity—in other words, seeking *thought*, in things, with the confidence that ultimately it must be found there.

In like manner the practical impulse, whenever it goes beyond, as in every conscious being it must somewhat go beyond, a craving for the satisfaction of immediate sensuous wants, implies the presence in our minds of an idea of absolute good, which is at once the realisation of the self and of a divine purpose in the world. What, indeed, could we possibly hope from our feeble efforts after a good, which is only gradually defining itself before us as we advance, if we did not believe that they unite themselves with the great stream of tendency which is independent of us? How could we think to attain our "being's end and aim," if we did not regard it ultimately identical with the "divine event to which the whole creation moves"? Hence a sober philosophy, admitting to the full all that can be said by

the Agnostic about the feebleness of the powers of men as individuals, and the greatness of the universe, can yet reject the Agnostic conclusion from these premises, and can maintain that an absolute or objective synthesis is no mere dream of the childhood of the human race, when the distinction between the possible and the impossible had not yet been made, but rather that it is a task which is forced upon us by our rational nature, and which, as rational beings, we cannot but attempt to fulfil.

All thought and action, all moral and intellectual life, presupposes in us the power of looking at things, not from the point of view of our own individuality, but *in ordine ad universum;* and whatever presumption there is in the idea of a universal synthesis is already involved in our existence as rational or self-conscious beings. Philosophy may therefore begin its work by a vindication of the religious consciousness—the consciousness of the infinite,—as presupposed in that very consciousness of the finite, which at present often claims to exclude it altogether, or to reduce it to an empty apotheosis of the unknown and unknowable. And having thus taught us

to regard the consciousness of the infinite as no mere illusion, but as the consciousness of a real object, an Absolute, a God, who has been revealing himself in and to man in all ages, philosophy must go on to consider the history of religion, and indeed the whole history of man as founded on religion, as the progressive development of this consciousness. Nor can it fail to discover that the idea on which the higher life of man is founded,—the idea of the unity of man as spiritual with an absolute Spirit,—has in Christianity been brought to light and made, in a manner, apprehensible by all. Whatever, therefore, may be the change of form to which this idea may have to submit in being applied to our ever-widening knowledge of nature and man, and whatever developments of it may be necessary ere it can solve the difficulties suggested by this increasing knowledge, we have good reason to be confident that we have in it a principle of universal synthesis which is adequate to the task.

On the other side, while this is true, it is also true that philosophy cannot conclusively meet the attacks of scientific criticism, except by coming into closer relation with the work of finite science

than it has ever hitherto done; for the only true answer to such attacks is to show that the facts and laws, upon which they rest, are capable of a higher interpretation than that which has been drawn from them by those who have attended to these facts and laws alone. Philosophy, therefore, in face of the increasing complexity of modern life, has a harder task laid upon it than ever was laid upon it before. It must emerge from the region of abstract principles and show itself able to deal with the manifold results of empirical science, giving to each of them its proper place and value. If it ever could sit "upon a hill remote" to reason of "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," it may not do so now. Within, as without, the special province of philosophy, the times are past when, to give spiritual help to men, it was sufficient to have a deep intuitive apprehension of a few great principles of spiritual life, and to denounce the representatives of empirical knowledge and finite interests, as sophists, "apostles of the dismal science," and "apes of the Dead Sea." We may be thankful to our Carlyles and Ruskins, as we are thankful in higher measure to the great men of their type in an earlier

time,—men who utter in powerful language the primary truths of morality and religion,—even when they express these truths in a one-sided and intolerant way, refusing to pay due regard to the achievements of finite science, and treating with contempt every improvement that does not involve a fundamental change of man's moral being. But it is, after all, a mark of weakness to address the modern world with the unguarded utterances of an ancient prophet. To repeat against men like Mill and Darwin the old watch-words with which Plato attacked the Sophists is, to say the least of it, an anachronism; for it is to refuse to recognise how far such men are from being Sophists, and how much of the spirit of Plato they have imbibed. And it is to forget on the other hand that philosophy has a different task from that which it had in the days of Plato, that it has abandoned the Greek dualism of form and matter, and thereby accepted the task of idealising interests and objects from which Plato might have been excused for turning away. He who would further the philosophical work of the future must renounce once for all this questionable luxury of contempt,

which in this, as indeed in almost all cases, is the mortal enemy of insight. For the speculative labour of the future is one that requires the patient consideration of every partial truth, and the persistent effort to give it its due place in the whole, as well as a firm apprehension of the principles that underlie all truth. And the practical labour of the future is, not merely by a shock to awaken men to the reality of spiritual things, but to follow out the spiritual principle in its application to all the details of our physical, economical, and social condition, till we have seen how the life of each human being, and every part of that life, may be made worth living for itself. Plato speaks of an "old quarrel between the poet and the philosopher," which is to be reconciled only if poetry can be shown to be truth, or truth, in its highest aspect, to be poetry. In like manner we may say of this almost equally "old quarrel" between the prophet and the man of science, that it can be healed only by carrying back our scattered knowledge of the facts and laws of nature to the principle upon which they rest, and, on the other hand, by developing that principle

so as to fill all the details of knowledge with a significance which they cannot have in themselves, but only as seen *sub specie æternitatis.*

THE GENIUS OF CARLYLE.[1]

THE best way of dealing with a great author is, in the first instance, to go to him without much criticism, and with a receptive mind, and to let his way of thinking permeate into our minds, until it becomes part of their very substance. For, till we have done so, our criticism will not be adequate; it will be wanting in sympathy, and it will rather tend to defend us against his spirit than enable us to appreciate it. When, however, we have for a long time submitted to such a powerful influence, when we have learned to live in the atmosphere of our author's ideas, so that we can almost anticipate the turn his thoughts will take on any occasion, it is advisable for us to change our method, to put him,

[1] A lecture delivered to the Dialectic Society of the University of Glasgow.

so to speak, at arm's length, and to attempt calmly to estimate what we have got from him, and so to determine his proper place among the inhabitants of our private Walhalla—among the company of the wise to whom we return ever again and again, as the permanent possessions of our intellectual life.

Such reflections as these naturally occurred to me in trying to put together a few thoughts about an author who was the greatest literary influence of my own student days. Every new generation has a language of its own, and is spoken to, if not with the most permanent power, at least with the greatest immediate awakening effect, by the writers who are fighting their way to recognition rather than by those who have already achieved the position of classics and authorities. And undoubtedly, at that time, Carlyle was the author who exercised the most powerful charm upon young men who were beginning to think. It is hardly possible for those who now for the first time take up Carlyle's works to realise how potent that charm was. "Since then many things have happened." It would scarcely be too much to say that then this country was

still outside of the main stream of European culture. It would certainly not be too much to say that its intellectual horizon was then closed in by many limits which now, partly by Carlyle's own agency, have ceased to exist. To name only a few points, Carlyle was the first in this country who discovered the full significance of the great revival of German literature, and the enormous reinforcement which its poetic and philosophic idealism had brought to the failing faith of man. He was at least the first who, in a definite and effective way, in broad and powerfully drawn outlines, represented to us the new ideas about man and his world which that literature contains. He spoke, therefore, from what was recognisably a higher point of view than that of the ordinary sects and parties which divided opinion in this country, a higher point of view than any of the prevailing orthodoxies and heterodoxies. He spoke, besides, not only for himself, but as representing the weight of a new learning and culture of which we were ignorant; and, in addition to his own great genius, he had the advantage of being thus the first from whom we heard the great words of Goethe and

Fichte, of Schiller and Richter and Novalis. Nor was he content to speak of the significance of German thought from an abstract point of view; he was continually trying to show what it meant *for us*. By the aid of the clue it put into his hands he gave us a new interpretation of history, and especially of those two great revolutions—the English and the French Revolution—from which the political, social, and religious history of this country and of modern Europe take their new beginning. He broke through the narrow limits of the conventional dignity of history, not only by an imaginative presentment of the facts which made them spring into life again, as if they were taking place before our eyes, but by what was almost a new kind of insight into those inner forces of belief and passion which are called into action whenever men are freed from the yoke of habit by the shock of revolution. His prophetic tones, his humour and pathos, his denunciations of cant and formalism, even the strange tricks he played with the English language, seemed to make literature a living thing, and to realise the conception of his first great book—to strip from humanity all that the tailor has done for it, and to let us

see the bare sinews and muscles of the Hercules, the passions that are hidden by the conventionalities of society, the eternal faiths and hopes, without some form of which it is impossible for men to live and die. Nor was he merely a student who cast new light on the past; he was inspired with a passion for social reform, which, at least in this country, was then felt by few. He expressed, almost for the first time in English, that disgust at the mean achievements of what we call civilisation, that generous wrath at the arbitrary limitation of its advantages, that deep craving for a better order of social life, which is the source of so many of the most important social and political movements of the present day. He set before us as our aim, not any single measure of reform, but a new idea of political and social life, in the light of which the policy of our statesmen of both parties seemed mean and paltry. Yet this new ideal, when we came to look at it closely, was, after all, nothing new or strange. It was in new words, words suited to the new time, the expression of those religious and moral principles which all in this country—and especially we Scotsmen—had received into ourselves almost with our mother's milk. It was

Puritanism idealised, made cosmopolitan, freed from the narrowness which clung to its first expression, or with which time had encrusted it. As Goethe, in the strange tale which Carlyle has translated, pictured the transformation of the fisherman's hut into the altar of a new Temple of Civilisation, so Carlyle seemed to change the old banner of the Covenant into a standard for the forward march of mankind toward a better ideal of human life. Thus at once widening our horizon and enkindling our enthusiasm, speaking to us in the name of a wider culture, and at the same time reviving the freshness of our earliest faith, and reuniting for us the light and the heat which were becoming divided in our inner life—what wonder that Carlyle was listened to with passionate admiration and reverence, such as is felt by the young only for a great teacher who meets and answers the questions which they are led by the spirit of the time to ask?

Since that date, many things have changed. The great literature which Carlyle first interpreted has become known, either directly or by other channels. The narrow ways of thinking on religious and social philosophy, the narrow canons

of literary criticism, against which he protested so vehemently, have lost their authority, partly through the teaching of Carlyle himself. This country has been opened up to cosmopolitan influences, and has been drawn into the main current of the great European movement of life and thought which began with the French Revolution. New forms in poetry, new methods in science, new ideas in history and philosophy, have to a great extent overpowered that insular spirit which characterised the nation during the first half of the century. Many thoughts which then seemed to be paradoxical to older men, and which young men accepted from Carlyle with a keen sense of their own intellectual audacity, have become almost common-places, so that the new generation is inclined rather to wonder that Carlyle should insist upon them so earnestly and so frequently. What, perhaps, tends still more to weaken his influence,—many controversies in which he took his part, and which he was disposed to decide by a direct "yes" or "no," have now passed into another stage, and are seen to be incapable of settlement by so simple a method. We must add that Carlyle, during his later years, did

not become more accessible, but, according to a law to which there are few exceptions, less accessible, to new ideas. It is an old Greek proverb that those whom the Gods love die young; and it is at least no fortunate circumstance for an author's fame that he should survive the best expression of his thought. In Carlyle's latest works, especially in the *Latter Day Pamphlets*, he repeated his old formulas with an increase of vehemence, but with a decrease of real force, and certainly with less perception of any limiting considerations. And his last fourteen years of activity were spent on the somewhat uncongenial task of painting one, who, at the highest estimate of him, was the most prosaic and irreligious of modern heroes; and the character of the work Carlyle had thus undertaken to do, tempted him to give a wilful emphasis to those one-sided dicta, which in his earlier writings seemed only the humorous exaggerations of an unpopular aspect of truth. Finally, after a considerable interval of the silence of old age, came the indiscretions of a biographer who thought it his duty to let "the many-headed beast know" everything, even the most private details of the

life of one of the most whimsical and dyspeptic of men,—a biographer, I may add, who misjudged his hero, as a man without humour was sure to misjudge one who was full of it, by taking all his extravagant statements *au pied de la lettre*.

Perhaps too much has been made of the indiscretion of a writer, who, so far as indiscreet publication was concerned, seems not to have gone much beyond what he was commissioned or allowed to do by Carlyle himself. But it is worth while to remark that there are many details of a man's life, which gain an undue importance by being revived after the lapse of years, and when it is no longer possible to supply the necessary explanation of the words and actions that express only the feelings of the passing hour. There is, it must be always remembered, a good deal even in the lives of the greatest of men that is not worth remembering (unless, indeed, we could remember everything); much which it disturbs the true light and shade, the true proportion of character, to remember. The little jealousies from which even the most generous are not free; the slight collisions of temper between those who are fundamentally in harmony; the tittle-tattle, sometimes with a shade of half-

meant malice, which helps to pass the moments of relaxation—these things are but the

> " . . . . dust,
> Of the windy ways of men,
> That lightly rises up,
> And is lightly laid again."

They have a meaning for the day, but they are essentially exaggerated if they are stored up, like flies in amber, beyond the day. The ordinary gossip of biography is interesting enough, but I must profess for myself an entire disbelief that any important additional light is thrown by it upon the character of men who have otherwise expressed themselves so fully as Carlyle. The truth of the details of such gossip is almost always incapable of being verified or set exactly in the proper light by the most careful research; and even if you could get at it, it is seldom worth the trouble. Upon the whole, I think we shall do well to take our idea of men like Carlyle from the works in which they have revealed themselves at their best, and to refuse to be moved by the imperfect records of private life, in which, as it is impossible to state or explain everything, what is stated is generally capable of various interpretations. Especially in the case of Carlyle,

I think our view will be not only more charitable, but more just, if we let him speak for himself, and if we attend most to the speech of his better days, before his eye was dimmed and his natural force abated by old age and sorrow.

The things of which I have just spoken explain how the present generation must necessarily stand in a very different attitude to Carlyle from that in which we stood some thirty years ago. In the interval he has lost almost all the adventitious advantages which he then had, and he now speaks with certain adventitious *dis*advantages to a generation which is irritated by the near, yet unsympathetic, view of a somewhat tyrannical personality. He is seen now without any special prestige or prophetic halo round his head, as a great man indeed, yet one who no longer stands forth among smaller men of his own generation, but rather as one who has withdrawn to his place among his equals on Parnassus. It is too soon finally to settle his rank as a man of letters, a historian, and a moral teacher, apart from all exaggerating or depressing influences; but it is not too soon to make some attempt to measure the value of his teaching, and in some approximate

way to estimate the works he has left behind, both by a literary and by a moral standard—two standards which, in his case at least, cannot well be separated.

In this lecture I must content myself with indicating one or two points which must be taken into account in such an estimate, and in doing so I shall confine myself to Carlyle's directly didactic works, passing over his great historical books on the French Revolution, on Cromwell, and on Frederick the Great with a single remark. The merits of these histories are obvious. Carlyle seldom attempts to generalise or to convey in abstract terms the meaning and spirit of a period of history, and, when he does so, his success is by no means of the highest. What he generally attempts, and achieves with supreme success, is imaginatively to realise the events and characters with which he has to deal, and to present them to us in such startling life-like colours that we almost seem to see the place and know in person the men of the story. Nor does he achieve this result by any of the deceptive scene-painting tricks of ordinary picturesque writing, but by a kind of dramatic reproduction, based on the most careful and accurate study of facts, which

lets us see the inmost spirit of the *dramatis personæ* through, and along with, the outward fashion of their lives. It is scarcely too much to say that he has done for Mirabeau and Danton, Cromwell and Frederic, Voltaire and Diderot, that which Shakspere did for his characters; he has made them visible in the clear hues of life, and at the same time transparent, so that we not only see them, but see into them. The same gift of penetrative imagination has enabled him, in the first and greatest of his historical works, not only to bring before us the outward events of the French Revolution, but almost to make us live in the streets of Paris, and feel again the wild throb of joy and terror, the fluctuation of suspicion and despair and infinite hope, first felt by those who were swept along in that great outburst of the subterranean forces of human nature. Such imaginative power of making the dead past alive again may not be all that is required of the ideal modern historian, but without it the work of the Dryasdust, the careful collector of facts, will lead to little, and the highest work of the philosophic searcher for laws and principles will be impossible.

I turn now to the more directly didactic works

of Carlyle, especially to the *Sartor Resartus* (which is the authentic exposition of his view of life in its most general principles), and to the pamphlets on *Chartism*, *Past and Present*, and *The Latter Day Pamphlets*, in which he tries to apply these principles to the political and social questions of his own time.

The *Sartor Resartus* is based upon an idea which we find already in Swift, an author with whom Carlyle has many points of kindred. In the "Tale of a Tub" we read as follows:—

"About this time it happened a sect arose, whose tenets obtained and spread very far, especially in the *grand monde* and among everybody of good fashion. They worshipped a sort of idol, who, as their doctrine delivered, did daily create men by a kind of manufactory operation. This idol they placed in the highest part of the house, on an altar erected about three feet; he was shown in the posture of a Persian Emperor, sitting on a superficies, with his legs interwoven under him. This god had a goose for an ensign, whence it is that some learned men pretend to deduce his original from Jupiter Capitolinus. . . . .

"The worshippers of this deity had also a system

of their belief which seemed to turn upon the following fundamentals. They held the universe to be a large suit of clothes, which invests everything; that the earth is invested by the air; the air is invested by the stars; and the stars are invested by the *primum mobile*. Look on this globe of earth, you will find it to be a very complete and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land but a fine coat faced with green? or the sea but a waistcoat of water-tabby? Proceed to the particular works of the creation, you will find how curious journeyman Nature has been to trim up the vegetable beaux; observe how sparkish a periwig adorns the head of a beech, and what a fine doublet of white satin is worn by the birch. To conclude from all, what is man himself but a micro-coat, or rather a complete suit of clothes with all its trimmings? As to his body, there can be no dispute; but examine even the acquirements of his mind. You will find these all contribute in their order to furnishing out an exact dress. To instance no more, is not Religion a cloak, Self-love a surtout, Vanity a shirt, and Honesty a pair of shoes, worn out in the dirt?"

"These postulates being admitted, it will follow

in due course of reasoning that those beings, which the world calls improperly suits of clothes, are in reality the most refined species of animals; or to proceed higher, that they are rational creatures or men. For is it not manifest that they live, and move, and talk, and perform all other offices of human life? Are not beauty, and wit, and mien, and breeding their inseparable proprieties? In short, we see nothing but these suits of clothes, hear nothing but them. Is it not they who walk the streets, fill up Parliament, coffee, play-houses? It is true, indeed, that these animals which are vulgarly called suits of clothes, or dresses, do, according to certain compositions, receive different appellations. If one of them be trimmed up with a gold chain, and a red gown, and a white rod, it is called a *Lord Mayor;* if certain ermine and furs be placed in a certain position, we style them a *judge;* and so, an apt conjunction of lawn and black satin, we entitle a *bishop.*"

This conception or metaphor, which is at the basis of the bitter and powerful humour of the "Tale of a Tub," Carlyle catches up and combines with an idealism which he learned from the Germans, especially from Fichte, with a sentimental

humour which reminds us of Sterne and Richter, and with a moral intensity which was his inborn inheritance as a son of Calvinistic Scotland. All these elements are fused together by a restless shaping imagination, which is not content till it has turned every idea into a vivid and definite picture. The result is one of the strangest, and in some respects one of the most chaotic of books, a book reducible to no recognised literary form; but at the same time a book rich in humour and imaginative insight, and full of that original force and inspiring power, which belongs to the work of one who insists on seeing and naming everything for himself. The main lesson which *Sartor Resartus* seeks to teach is that, to the ordinary eye, this is a world of deceiving and confusing shows and appearances; but that to the eye that can look through the shows and penetrate to their deeper meaning, it is a world of revelation, the manifestation of a spiritual principle. "Matter," says Carlyle, "were it never so despicable, is spirit, the manifestation of spirit; were it never so honourable, can it be more?" "All visible things are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, it is not there at

all. Matter exists only spiritually and to represent some idea and body it forth. Hence clothes, as despicable as we think them, are so unspeakably significant. Clothes, from the king's mantle downwards, are emblematic not of want only, but of a manifold coming victory over want. On the other hand, all emblematic things are properly clothes, thought-woven or hand-woven.[1] "The universe itself is, as Goethe says, a 'living garment of deity,' a garment through which He reveals Himself to the eye of poet and prophet, and in a measure to every one who is prepared to see. We sit as in a boundless phantasmagoria and dream-grotto: boundless, for the faintest star, the remotest century, lies not even nearer the verge thereof; sounds and many coloured visions flit round our sense, but Him, the unslumbering, whose work both dream and dreamer are, we see not, except in rare half-waking moments, suspect not. 'Creation' says one, 'lies before us like a glorious rainbow; but the sun that made it lies behind us, hidden from us.' Then in that strange dream how we clutch at shadows as if they were substances, and sleep deepest when fancying ourselves most awake!"[2]

[1] Book I. Chap. XI. [2] Book I. Chap. VIII.

If it be asked how this thesis is supported and developed in the *Sartor Resartus*, I must content myself here with two remarks on the *method* and the *matter* contained in it.

First, as to its *method*. It is almost needless to say that you will not find in it an attempt to demonstrate anything logically, either by old or by new logical methods. As to the former, Carlyle never loses an opportunity of, so to speak, insulting the syllogism and all the weapons of the old armoury of Logic. And though he owes much to the later German philosophy, especially to Fichte's popular works, he seems to have cared only about the results, and nothing at all about the processes. Metaphysical theories in general, (though when he speaks in detail about them, we generally find him referring to the theories of the sensationalist and materialistic schools,) he regards as absurd attempts to measure the immensurable, or weigh with earthly scales that infinite reality, which we can, he thinks, imaginatively symbolise, but which we cannot scientifically define or determine. Take one passage from many. "Yes, friends," says Teufelsdröck, "not our logical, mensurative faculty, but our imaginative one, is

king over us, priest and prophet to lead us heaven-ward, or magician and wizard to lead us hell-wards. Nay, even for the basest sensualist, what is sense but the implement of phantasy, the vessel it drinks out of? Even in the dullest existence there is a sheen either of inspiration or of madness, (thou partly hast it in thy choice which of the two,) that gleams in from the circumambient eternity, and colours with its own hues our little islet of time. The understanding indeed is thy window, too clear thou canst not make it, but phantasy is thy eye, with its colour-giving retina, healthy or diseased."[1] So also in the well-known essay entitled "Characteristics," Carlyle dwells on the fact that the absence of reflection and the presence of imaginative faith is that which distinguishes every healthy and noble period in the world's history, whereas it is the indication of a period of decay when men begin to reflect, to analyse, to philosophise.

I shall not trouble you at present with any vindication of philosophy, as I wish rather to use our time in making clear what exactly is Carlyle's view. And, indeed, the general idea of the sequence of an

[1] Book III. Chap. III.

age of reflection upon an age of faith, upon which Carlyle insists, is a commonplace of modern philosophy, which he probably learned in the first instance from Fichte's lectures on the *Characteristics of the Present Age*. What is more to the purpose is to notice how Carlyle's conception of the power and work of imagination chimes in with the purpose of his book, which, as I have already said, is to distinguish the reality from the show of phenomenon, which is its necessary manifestation. Viewing the universe as a mystery, in the sense that we cannot explain it, or find any speculative solution of its difficulties, he yet regards its inner meaning as an 'open secret,' which through manifold symbols reveals itself to the imaginative intuition of faith. Hence, he is continually trying to enforce the lesson of what he calls "Natural Supernaturalism," by which he means that, whatever may be thought of special miracles, the whole world is miraculous. For what was a miracle supposed to be? It was the indication that spirit is more and higher than matter. But "natural supernaturalism" is the discovery that the natural world is itself the symbol, vesture, or phenomenon of a spiritual or divine power, which also manifests

itself in a higher way in human history, as a divine justice which is always executing itself upon men and nations. And here we find the key to one of what we may call Carlyle's paradoxes, "Speech is silvern, silence is golden." By this he means that it is impossible, strictly speaking, to utter or fully express the truth. You can only discover some more or less inadequate symbol for it, and your best symbol will lose its virtue if you do not make it a basis for action. With regard to the first of these points, Carlyle seems to hold that, as it is impossible for us speculatively to explain the universe from its principle of unity, we can only set the truth before us and realise it for ourselves through some definite form of sense or imagination, which we take as a *symbol* to express the inexpressible. The history of religion is but the history of the different symbols which have successively risen into prominence and then worn themselves out to make way for better, or which, to use the fundamental metaphor of Carlyle, have been cast aside like old clothes, that humanity might re-invest itself in the garment of a new faith. But, again, such symbols, grasped by the intuitive imagination, have not, as Kant would have said, a speculative,

but only a practical value. They have a kind of truth which we can test only by experiment on our own lives; they embody beliefs upon which we can live, but which we cannot scientifically verify. Hence faith in them cannot be established by any purely speculative process. As Carlyle is fond of saying, "Doubt cannot be removed except by action." For the ancient precept "Know thyself," he would substitute "Know thy work." "Consider," he says, "how in the meanest kind of labour the whole soul of a man is composed to harmony as soon as he sets himself to work. Properly, thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working; the rest is all a hypothesis of knowledge—a thing to be argued about in the schools—a thing floating in the clouds in endless logic vortices. Doubt of whatever kind can be ended by action alone."

The healthy state of man, then, is the state of unconscious, unreflective energy, in which his faith is like the air he breathes—something taken for granted, and made the basis of noble action. Unhappily this is not always possible, for the best symbols gradually lose their power and become unbelievable, and there is always an interval of

division, doubt, and weakness ere a new symbol can be created. Now, it is our unhappy lot, according to Carlyle, to be born in a time when the old garments are worn out—a time of hesitation and doubt, in which the deeper meaning of the world has been lost. "Two centuries ago," he declares, "they hung Cromwell's body from the Tigburn gallows, because he found the Christian religion inexcusable," and ever since men have attempted "to govern without God." "Governing by the Christian law of God had been found a thing of battle, confusion, convulsion, an infinitely difficult thing," and it was resolved "to govern by only so much of God's Christian law as should prove quiet and convenient."[1] From this time the decay of faith began, which has been gradually undermining our life, till we have now "pretty well exhausted what of firm earth there was for us to march on." Religion has become a hypocrisy, which has therefore called forth an atheistic philosophy to destroy it; our poetry has become a mere plaything of idle moments, and our best singers sing "as from the throat outwards." "On the one side has been dreary cant, with a *remi-*

[1] *Past and Present*, Book III. Chap. VI.

miscue of things holy and divine: on the other side, acrid candour, with a *prophecy* of things brutal, infernal." Nature, instead of being to us a symbol and manifestation of the divine, has become for us a piece of dead mechanism; and, what is worse than this, the mechanical view of things has extended itself to the life of man, which is now regarded by most simply as a machine, moved by the sensuous springs of pleasure and pain. With this, too, all idea of a social unity has been lost: men have come to regard themselves as individual units, competing with each other, and trampling down each other in the struggle for material good. "*Laissez Faire*" is supposed to be the sole policy of government and "cash payment the sole nexus of man to man." And the inevitable result has followed—lawlessness and misery, anarchy and revolt.

This is what has come about, because the old symbol of that reality which is higher than the material or natural world has become worn out; no new accredited symbol has yet taken its place. But the germs of a higher faith are already showing themselves, and a more devout study of nature and human history will develop them to maturity.

"Nature in late centuries was irreverently supposed to be dead, an old eight-day clock made many thousand years ago, and still ticking on, but as dead as brass, which the Maker at most sat looking at, in a distant, singular, and now plainly indeed, incredible manner. But now I am happy to observe she is everywhere asserting herself not to be dead brass at all, but alive and miraculous, celestial-infernal, with an emphasis that will again penetrate the thickest head on the planet by-and-by." And with this consciousness of the life and unity of nature, which is expressed above all in Goethe's wonderful song of the "Earth Spirit," there is arising also a belief in a divine justice which is not dead or sleeping, but revealing itself to whoever has an eye to penetrate through the superficial appearances, and discern the real meaning of human history. Might is right, for right is the only real might. This inversion, which has often been ill-interpreted, is but Carlyle's way of expressing a faith that the apparent failure of good is really victory. "Await the issue; in all battles, if you await the issue, each fighter is prospered according to his right. His right and his might, at the close of the account, were one and the

same." "At the close of the account,"—Carlyle explains what he means by this in the immediately following words, "He has fought with all his might, and in exact proportion to his right he has prevailed. His very death is no victory over him; he dies, indeed, but his work lives. The cause thou fightest for, so far as it is true, no further, but precisely so far, is sure of victory."

What shall we say of this creed? We might call it, in Carlyle's own language, a Christianity divested of almost all its clothing; a Christianity without supernaturalism, without dogmas, and without church, reduced to the belief that the universe is in its deepest meaning spiritual, and that therefore, as he expresses it, "the true Shekinah is man"; a belief, in other words, that in the moral life of man we have the clearest revelation or symbol of that which the divine Spirit is. The new element which makes Carlyle's restatement of this faith more than a spectre of abstraction derived from Christianity is that which it has in common with the German idealism, namely, the attempt to show, not that spirit interferes with matter, or miraculously works upon it from without, but that the material or sensible world is *itself*,

in its deepest essence, spiritual. Thus, beneath and beyond the phenomena of outward nature, there is a reality unknown to science, because the methods and categories of science are inadequate to reach it, but revealed in that highest kind of poetry which is truth. And, again, in human history, when we have exhausted all the ordinary causal explanation of events, we have still to leave room for an ultimate interpretation of them by that moral necessity, according to which, in the words of Schiller, "*Die Welt-Geschichte ist das Welt-Gericht*," the history of the world is the judgment of the world. This doctrine Carlyle does not, as I have already said, seek to prove in any logical or philosophical way; he rather seeks, if one may use a somewhat inadequate word, to *illustrate* it. In other words, he seeks to show in case after case how, before the penetrative power of imaginative insight, the facts of nature and history become transparent and disclose their deeper meaning.

Of the outward nature, indeed, Carlyle speaks only in the way of casual remark, though he is always seeking out analogies, which tend to show that the ultimate meaning of the natural is the

spiritual. But the aim of all his great historical works is, in Milton's phrase, "to vindicate the ways of God to man." He has too much faith to wish to twist the facts of history, or to feel any need to twist them, in order to point a moral.

His accuracy in relation to all the local and personal detail of his story is unimpeachable, and, indeed, rises to a level very rarely attained even by the most exact of modern historians. But he is always trying to penetrate beneath the facts to the ultimate moral forces, upon the strength of which he believes the conflict to turn, and to show that, in spite of all appearance to the contrary, the soul of the world is just. And the great weapon which he uses to attain this result is his strange gift of combined humour and imagination—a gift which enables him, in painting the events of history, continually to keep before us at once the greatness and the littleness of men, the narrowness and finitude of the interests for which they contend, when we regard these interests in themselves, and their infinite importance when we look at their moral significance.

Thus, he never fails to project his pictures, as

it were, upon a background of the infinite; and to show at once the absurdity and the pathos of the doings of men when they are contemplated "*sub specie æternitatis.*" Nor does he ever fail to point the moral that, viewed in this highest light, all the importance which is bestowed upon events and persons, by any accidental or outward cause, disappears, till they are lowered or exalted to their true place, as the manifestation of spiritual forces. He tries, in short, to make us see through the external puppet-show of human life, to the internecine struggle of good and evil which it half reveals and half conceals.

And his great power of doing this enables us to understand another of what I have called Carlyle's paradoxes, the doctrine, namely, that poets, at least in the present age, should cease to sing, or, as he puts it, that they should cease to "invent anything but reality." By this he means that they should henceforth cease to produce what is called fiction, and should confine themselves to the task of throwing the light of their imagination upon history and biography. Carlyle even goes so far in this direction as to regret that Shakespeare gave so much of his faculty to fresh constructive efforts,

and so little to the illumination of the history of England. "And yet of Shakespeare, too," he declares, "it is not the fiction I admire, but the fact. To say truth, what I most of all admire are the traces he shows of a talent that could have turned the history of England into a kind of *Iliad*, almost, perhaps, into a kind of *Bible*."

To controvert such a literary heresy as this is unnecessary. It is enough to say, from Carlyle's own point of view, that truth and the detail of accident and circumstance are not the same thing, and that the attempt to hold to the latter with exactness can rarely be coincident with the highest expression of the former. Is it in *Richard the Third* and *Henry the Fifth*, or in *Lear* and *Hamlet*, that Shakespeare gives us the deepest truth? Carlyle's great faculty of penetrative insight, his power of seeing the poetry of life through the most ordinary details, and, we must add, his want of the highest power, either of abstract thinking on the one side or of creative imagination on the other, produced in him a kind of intolerance of every form of literary utterance except that in which he himself was strongest. We might even say that in insisting upon the importance

of fact, he sometimes confused the sense of the word in which he uses it, when he says that "the infinite is most sure of all facts," with the sense in which it is a fact that we had several meals yesterday. As usual, however, his paradox is but the one-sided expression of a truth,—the truth, namely, that the only ideas worth attending to are those which have been and are realising themselves in the world, even through the very appearances or "facts" that seem to obstruct them; and that the very highest value of literature, whether poetical, historical, or philosophical, is to open our eyes to these ideals. Such an explanation enables us to be just to Carlyle, and at the same time to escape from the conclusions to which he would lead us.

I have not left myself room to say almost anything of Carlyle's practical application of his principles to the political and social life of his time, but I must add a few words on this topic. All his writings on such questions—*Past and Present*, *Chartism*, etc.—are closely related to his great historical works. The theme which he tries to illustrate in both is the decay and the renewal of belief, and therefore of the social order that is dependent

upon it. In his *French Revolution* he paints the great conflagration that resulted from the decay of the old social order of France. In the lives of Cromwell and Frederic he shows us how, by the influence of a heroic personality, the life and unity of a nation may be restored; and in his political pamphlets I need scarcely say that his one great fundamental idea is *Hero-worship*. He cares little or nothing for forms of government, and regards them all as simply means to find the true hero and put him in his rightful place. "Hero-worship," he asserts, "done differently in every different epoch of the world, is the soul of all social business among men; the doing of it ill, or the doing of it well, measures exactly what degree of well-being or of ill-being there is in the world's affairs." [1]

He recognises indeed, at least in his earlier works, that the methods of modern hero-worship, or of getting our real captains, will be different from those of earlier times, and even that they involve in a greater degree the consent of the governed. If he declares that "an actual new Sovereignty, Industrial Aristocracy—real, not im-

[1] *Past and Present*, Book I. Chap. VI.

aginary aristocracy—is indispensable for us," and that a state of society in which there is no nexus of man to man but cash payment cannot last, he yet acknowledges that "we are to bethink us that men cannot now be bound to men by *brass collars*" (as Gurth, the swine-herd, was in *Ivanhoe*). "Not at all—that brass-collar method, in all figures of it, has vanished out of Europe for evermore. Huge Democracy, walking the streets everywhere in its sack coat, has asserted so much, irrevocably, brooking no reply." He even adds that the true question for the modern time is, "How in conjunction with inevitable Democracy indispensable Sovereignty is to exist."[1] But he always admits so much with a kind of grudge, and in his later works he seems to recoil from the admission, and to regard the advance toward Democracy as a mere "Shooting Niagara." He cannot believe that, under a democratic system, the real leaders of men will get to the front, and he has no belief whatever in any tendency of a free nation to work its way by freedom to the correction of its own errors. His greatest aberration, his defence of slavery, and the

[1] *Past and Present*, Book IV. Chap. I.

astonishing blunder—for we can count it no less in a man like him—that made him altogether blind to the real meaning of the American War, are connected with this. We are told, however, by Mr. Froude that he afterwards acknowledged that there was perhaps more in that great struggle than he had discerned at the time.

The truth is that Carlyle was strongly individualistic in his whole tone of mind. He had, at least, no firm grasp of the organic unity or *solidarity* of human life, or of the creative powers of those social forces which arise, not from the individuals taken separately, but from the way in which they act and react upon each other in society. In his own life he stood apart from other men, confident in himself and his judgments; and though penetrating in his insight into character, yet he was quite incapable of the "give and take" of social life, or, indeed, of doing anything in regard to others, except simply to insist on his own will and his own opinions. It was in harmony with this that, in his view of history, he had his eye fixed mainly on the doings of certain leaders, and far too little on the general stream of thought and life which carried both leaders and followers along

with it. In this point of view the very title of Emerson's book, *Representative Men*, is a kind of silent criticism upon Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-worship*. In social politics, again, Carlyle had far too high an estimate of the advantage of men being *driven* into the right road, and far too low an estimate of the difference between that method and the method of governing them through their own will.

At the same time, every one must admit that Carlyle is right in saying that the success of this, as of every system, must depend greatly on the ability of men to recognise and to reverence those who are their true guides and superiors, though such reverence need by no means imply anything like an absolute submission, either of opinion or will. But Carlyle, whom we may call the modern Elijah, was ever too apt, like the ancient Elijah, to think that he was standing alone, and above all others required to be told that there were yet seven thousand men in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. And as in his picture of history he was apt to become almost a special pleader for the individual he had selected as hero, so in politics he was inclined to

regard all responsibility of the rulers to the people as a hindrance to the efficient ruling of the hero when he should be found. On the other hand, our view of his political thought would not be complete without noting how much he did to banish the eighteenth-century theory of the limitations of the government to the functions of a grand policeman, and to revive the old Platonic idea that the State had a social and ethical work to perform—an idea which, it may be remarked, could scarcely be realised in modern times by any Government without a strong democratic force behind it.

With these insufficient words I must leave Carlyle's political pamphlets. Their great power lies, not in the specific proposals which they contain, or even in the truth of their analysis of the political situation, but in their constant preaching of the lesson that a moral regeneration of society is more important than any change of the machinery of government, and is indeed necessary to make any such change effective. They lift us out of the atmosphere of party, and force us to look beyond special measures to the deepest social problems; and they are full of words of reproof, of warning, and encouragement, winged with in-

sight, humour, and imagination, which thrill through us like battle music. After everything has been said that can be said in the way of criticism, we are forced to recognise that no English writer in this century has done more to elevate and purify our ideals of life, and to make us conscious that the things of the spirit are real, and that, in the last resort, there is no other reality.

END OF VOL. I.

ERRATA.

Page 184, line 20, for "will" read "shall."
Page 253, line 8, for "Tigburn" read "Tyburn."
line 9, for "inexcusable" read "inexecutable."

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BY

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CARTESIANISM.

BY Cartesianism is here meant the philosophy developed in the works of Des Cartes, Malebranche, and Spinoza. It is impossible to exhibit the full meaning of these authors except in their relation to each other, for they are all ruled by one and the same thought in different stages of its evolution. It may be true that Malebranche and Spinoza were prepared, the former by the study of Augustine, the latter by the study of Jewish philosophy, to draw from Cartesian principles consequences which Des Cartes never anticipated. But the foreign light did not alter the picture on which it was cast, but only let it be seen more clearly. The consequences were legitimately drawn. It may be shown that they lay in the system from the first, and that they were evolved by nothing but its own immanent dialectic. At the same time, it is not likely that they would ever have been brought into such

clear consciousness, or expressed with such consistency, except by a philosopher whose circumstances and character had completely detached him from all the convictions and prejudices of the age. In Malebranche, Cartesianism found an interpreter whose meditative spirit was fostered by the cloister, but whose speculative boldness was restrained by the traditions of the Catholic church. In Spinoza it found one who was in spirit and position more completely isolated than any monk, who was removed from the influence of the religious as well as the secular world of his time, and who in his solitude seemed scarcely ever to hear any voice but the voice of philosophy. It is because Cartesianism found such a pure organ of expression that its development is, in some sense, complete and typical. Its principles have been carried to their ultimate result, and we have before us all the data necessary to determine their value.

Des Cartes was, in the full sense of the word, a partaker of the modern spirit. He was equally moved by the tendencies that produced the Reformation, and the tendencies that produced the revival of letters and science. Like Erasmus

and Bacon, he sought to escape from a transcendent and unreal philosophy of the other world to a knowledge of man and of the world in which he lives. But, like Luther, he found within human experience, among the matters nearest to man, the consciousness of God, and therefore his renunciation of scholasticism did not end either in materialism or in that absolute distinction between faith and reason which inevitably leads to the downfall of faith. What was peculiar to Des Cartes, however, was the speculative interest which made it impossible for him to rest in mere experience, whether of things spiritual or things secular, without searching, both in our consciousness of God and also in our consciousness of the world, for the links by which they are bound to the consciousness of self. In both cases it is his aim to go back to the beginning, to retrace the unconscious process by which the world of experience was built up, to discover the hidden logic that connects the different parts of the structure of belief, and to substitute a reasoned system, all whose elements are interdependent, for an unreasoned congeries of opinions. Hence his first step involves reflection, doubt, and

abstraction. Turning the eye of reason upon itself, he tries to measure the value of that collection of beliefs of which he finds himself possessed ; and the first thing that reflection seems to discover is its accidental and unconnected character. It is a mass of incongruous materials, accumulated without system and untested. Its elements have been put together under all kinds of influences, without any conscious intellectual process, and therefore we can have no assurance of their reality. In order that we may have such assurance, we must unweave the web of experience and thought which we have first woven in our sleep, that we may begin at the beginning and weave it over again with "clear and distinct" consciousness of what we are doing. *De omnibus dubitandum est.* We must free ourselves by one decisive effort from the weight of custom, prejudice, and tradition with which our consciousness of the world has been overlaid, that in that consciousness in its simplest and most elementary form we may find the true beginning of knowledge.

The method of doubt is at the same time a method of abstraction, by which Des Cartes rises above the thought of the particular ob-

jects of knowledge, in order that he may find the primary truth in which lies the very definition of knowledge, or the reason why anything can be said to be true. First disappears the whole mass of dogmas and opinions as to God and man which are confessedly received on mere authority. Then the supposed evidence of sense is rejected, because external reality is not immediately given in sensation. It is acknowledged by all that the senses often mislead us as to the nature of the things without us, and perhaps they may also mislead us as to there being anything without us at all. Nay, by a stretch of effort, we can carry doubt beyond this point, we can doubt even mathematical truth. When, indeed, we have our thoughts directed to the geometrical demonstration, when the steps of the process are immediately before our minds, we cannot but assent to the proposition that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles; but when we forget or turn away our thoughts from such demonstration, we can imagine that God or some powerful spirit is playing upon our minds to deceive them, so that even our most certain judgments may be illusory.

In this naïve manner does Des Cartes express the idea that there are necessities of thought prior to, and presupposed in the truth of geometry. He is seeking to strip thought of all the "lendings" that seem to come to it from anything but itself, of all relation to being that can be supposed to be given to it from without, that he may discover the primary unity of thought and being on which all knowledge depends. And this he finds in pure self-consciousness. Whatever I abstract from, I cannot abstract from self, from the "I think" that, as Kant puts it, "accompanies all our ideas"; for it was just the independence of this universal element in relation to the particulars that made all our previous abstraction possible. Even doubt rests on certitude; alone with self I cannot get rid of this self. By an effort of thought I separate my thinking self from all that I think, but the thinking self remains, and in thinking I am. *Cogito ergo sum.* The objective judgment of self-consciousness is bound up with or involved in the very faculty of judging, and therefore remains when we abstract from all other objective judgments. It is an assertion involved in the very process by

which we dismiss all other assertions. Have we not then a right to regard it as a primitive unity of thought and being, in which is contained, or out of which may be developed, the very definition of truth?

The sense in which Des Cartes understood his first principle becomes clearer when we look at his answers to the objections made against it. On the one hand it was challenged by those who asked, like Gassendi, why the argument should be based especially on thought, and why we might not say with as good a right *ambulo ergo sum.* Des Cartes explains that it is only as referred to consciousness that walking is an evidence of my existence; but if I say "I am conscious of walking, therefore I exist," this is equivalent to saying, "I think in one particular way, therefore I exist." But it is not thinking in a particular way, but thinking in general that is co-extensive with my existence. I am not always conscious of walking, or of any other special state or object, but I am always conscious; for except in consciousness there is no ego, and where there is consciousness there is always an ego. Do I then always think, even

in sleep, asks the objector ; and Des Cartes exposes himself to the criticisms of Locke by answering that it is impossible that there should ever be an interval in the activity of consciousness, and by insisting that, as man is essentially a thinking substance, the child thinks, or is self-conscious, even in its mother's womb. The difficulty disappears when we observe that the question as to the conditions under which self-consciousness is developed in the individual human subject, does not affect the nature of self-consciousness in itself, or in its relation to knowledge. The force of Des Cartes's argument really lies in this, that the world as an intelligible world exists only for a conscious self, and that therefore the unity of thought and being which is realised in self-consciousness is the presupposition of all knowledge. Of this self it is true to say that it exists only as it thinks, and that it thinks always. *Cogito ergo sum* is, as Des Cartes points out, not a syllogism, but the expression of an identity which is discerned by the simple intuition of the mind.[1] If it were

[1] *Resp. ad secundas objectiones*, 74. I quote from the Elzevir edition.

otherwise, the major "*omne quod cogitat existit*" would require to have been known before the minor "*cogito*"; whereas, on the contrary, it is from the immediate consciousness of being as contained in self-consciousness that that major can alone be derived. Again, when Hobbes and others argued that thinking is, or may be, a property of a material substance, Des Cartes answers that the question whether the material and the thinking substance are one does not meet us at the outset, but can only be solved after we have considered what is involved in the conception of those different substances respectively.[1] In other words, to begin by treating thinking as a quality of a material substance is to go outside of the intelligible world for an explanation of the intelligible world. It is to ask for something prior to that which is first in thought. If it be true that the consciousness of self is that from which we cannot abstract, that which is involved in the knowledge of any object whatever, then to go beyond it and seek for a reason or explanation of it in anything else,

[1] *Resp. ad tertias objectiones*, 94

is to go beyond the beginning of knowledge; it is to ask for a knowledge before knowledge.

Des Cartes, however, is himself unfaithful to this point of view; for, strictly taken, it would involve the consequence, not only that there is nothing prior to the pure consciousness of self, but that there can be no object which is not in necessary relation to it. Hence there can be no absolute opposition between thought and anything else, no opposition which thought itself does not transcend. But Des Cartes commits the error of making thought the property of a substance, a *res cogitans*, which as such can immediately or directly apprehend nothing but thoughts or ideas; while, altogether outside of these thoughts and ideas, there is another substance which is characterised by the property of extension, and with which thought has nothing to do. Matter in space is thus changed, in Kantian language, into "a thing in itself," an object out of all relation to the subject; and, on the other hand, mind seems to be shut up in the magic circle of its own ideas, without any capacity of breaking out or apprehending any reality but itself. Between thought and being, in spite of their *subjective* unity in self-consciousness,

a great gulf seems still to be fixed, which cannot be crossed, unless thought should become extended, or matter think. But to Des Cartes the dualism is absolute, because it is a presupposition with which he starts. Mind cannot go out of itself, cannot deal with anything but thought, without ceasing to be mind; and matter must cease to be matter ere it can lose its absolute externality, its nature as having *partes extra partes*, and acquire the unity of mind. They are opposed as the divisible and the indivisible, and there is no possible existence of matter in thought except a representative existence. The ideal (or, as Des Cartes calls it, objective) existence of matter *in* thought, and the real (or, as Des Cartes calls it, formal) existence of matter *out of* thought, are absolutely different and independent things.

It was, however, impossible for Des Cartes to be content with a subjective idealism that confined all knowledge to the tautological expression of self-consciousness: "I am I," "What I perceive I perceive." If the individual is to find in self-consciousness the principle of all knowledge, there must be something in that consciousness which transcends the distinction of self and not self,

which carries him beyond the limit of his own individuality. What, then, is the point where the subjective consciousness passes out into the objective, from which it seemed at first absolutely excluded? Des Cartes answers that it is through the connection of the consciousness of self with the consciousness of God. It is because we find God in our minds that we find anything else. The proof of God's existence is the hinge on which the whole Cartesian philosophy turns. It is therefore necessary, before going farther, to examine somewhat closely the nature of that proof.

Des Cartes, in the first place, tries to extract a criterion of truth out of the *cogito ergo sum*. Why am I assured of my own existence? It is because the conception of existence is at once and immediately involved in the consciousness of self. I can logically distinguish the two elements, but I cannot separate them; whenever I clearly and distinctly conceive the one, I am forced to think the other along with it. But this gives me a rule for all judgments whatever, a principle which is related to the *cogito ergo sum* as the formal to the material principle of knowledge. Whatever we cannot separate from the clear and distinct con-

ception of anything necessarily belongs to it in reality; and, on the other hand, whatever we can separate from the clear and distinct conception of anything does not necessarily belong to it in reality. Let us therefore set an object clearly before us, let us sever it in thought so far as is possible from all other objects, and we shall at once be able to determine what properties and relations are essential, and what are not essential to it. And if we find empirically that any object manifests a property or relation not involved in the clear and distinct conception of it, we can say with certainty that such property or relation does not belong to it except by arbitrary arrangement, or, in other words, by the external combination of things which in their own nature have no affinity or connection.

Now, by the application of this principle, we might at once assure ourselves of many mathematical truths; but, as has been already shown, there is a point of view from which we may doubt even these, so long as the idea of a God that deceives us is not excluded. If it is not certain that there is a God who cannot lie, it is not certain that there is an objective matter in space to which mathematical truth applies. But the existence of

God may be proved in two ways. In the first place, it may be proved through the principle of causality, which is a self-evident principle. We have in our mind many ideas, and, according to the principle of causality, all these ideas must be derived from something that contains a "formal" reality which corresponds to their "objective" reality, *i.e.*, which contains at least as much reality in its existence *out of* thought as they contain in their existence *in* thought. Now, we might derive from ourselves not only the ideas of other minds like ourselves, but possibly also the ideas of material objects; for such objects are lower in the scale of existence than ourselves, and therefore the ideas of them might be got by omitting some of the qualities which distinguish ourselves. But the idea of God, of a Being who is eternal and immutable, all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good, cannot be derived from our own limited and imperfect existence. Its origin, therefore, must be sought in a Being who contains actually in Himself all that is contained in our idea of Him.

To this argument it was objected by some of the critics of Des Cartes that the idea of God as the infinite Being is merely negative, and that it is

derived from the finite simply by abstracting from its conditions. Des Cartes answers that the case is just the reverse; the infinite is the positive idea, and the finite is the negative, and it is therefore the former which is the presupposition of the latter. As Kant, at a later date, pointed out that space is not a general conception, abstracted from the ideas of particular spaces, and representing the common element in them; but that, on the contrary, the ideas of particular spaces are got by the limitation of the one infinite space which is prior to them, so Des Cartes maintains that the idea of the finite is attained by limitation of the infinite, and not the idea of the infinite by abstraction from the particular determinations of the finite. It is a necessary consequence of this that the self-consciousness of a finite being presupposes the consciousness of the infinite. Hence the idea of God is not merely one among the other ideas which we have, but it is the one idea that is necessary to our very existence as thinking beings, the idea through which alone we can think ourselves, or anything else. "It ought never to be supposed," says Des Cartes, "that the conception of the infinite is a negative idea, got by negation of the finite, just as I conceive

repose to be merely negation of movement, and darkness merely the negation of light. On the contrary, I see manifestly that there is more reality in the infinite than in the finite substance, and that therefore I have in me the notion of the infinite, *even in some sense prior to the notion of the finite*, or, in other words, that the notion of myself in some sense presupposes the notion of God; for how could I doubt or desire, how could I be conscious of anything as a want, how could I know that I am not altogether perfect, if I had not in me the idea of a Being more perfect than myself, by comparison with whom I recognise the defects of my own existence?"[1] Des Cartes then goes on to illustrate in various ways the thesis that the consciousness of a defective and growing nature cannot give rise to the idea of infinite perfection, but, on the contrary, presupposes it. We could not think of a series of approximations, unless there were somehow present to us the idea of the completed infinite as the goal at which we aim. If we had not the consciousness of ourselves as finite *in relation* to the infinite, either we should not be conscious of ourselves at all, or we should be conscious of ourselves as

[1] *Meditatio tertia.*

infinite. The image of God is so impressed by Him upon us that we "conceive that resemblance wherein the idea of God is contained by the same faculty whereby we are conscious of ourselves." In other words, our consciousness of ourselves is at the same time consciousness of our finitude, and hence of our relation to a being who is infinite.

The principle which underlies the reasoning of Des Cartes is, that to be conscious of a limit is to transcend it. We could not feel the limits either upon our thought or upon our existence, we could not doubt or desire, if we did not already apprehend something beyond these limits. Nay, we could not be conscious of our existence as individual selves, unless we were conscious of that which is not ourselves, and of a unity in which both self and not-self are included. Our individual life is therefore to us, as self-conscious beings, a part of a wider universal life. Doubt and aspiration are but the manifestation of the essential division and contradiction of a nature, which, as conscious of itself, is at the same time conscious of the whole of which it is a part. And as the existence of a self and its consciousness are one, so we may say that a

thinking being is not only an individual, but always in some sense identified with that universal unity of being to which it is essentially related.

If Des Cartes had followed out this line of thought, he would have been led at once to the pantheism of Spinoza, if not beyond it. As it is, he is on the verge of contradiction with himself when he speaks of the consciousness of God as *in some sense* prior to the consciousness of self. How can anything be prior to the first principle of knowledge? It is no answer to say that the consciousness of God is the *principium essendi*, while the consciousness of self is the *principium cognoscendi*. For, if the idea of God is prior to the idea of self, knowledge must begin where existence begins, with God. The words "in some sense," with which Des Cartes qualifies his assertion of the priority of the idea of God, only betray his hesitation and his partial consciousness of the contradiction in which he is involved. Some of Des Cartes's critics presented this difficulty to him in another form, and accused him of reasoning in a circle, when he said that it is because God cannot lie that we are certain that our clear and distinct ideas do not deceive us. The very existence of

the conscious self, the *cogito ergo sum*, which is the first of all truths, and therefore prior in certitude to the existence of God, is believed only because of the clearness and distinctness with which we apprehend it. How, then, they asked, can God's truthfulness be our security for a principle which we must use in order to prove the being of God? The answer of Des Cartes is somewhat lame. We cannot doubt any self-evident principle, or even any truth based on a self-evident principle, when we are directly contemplating it in all the necessity of its evidence; it is only when we forget or turn away from this evidence, and begin to think of the possibility of a deceitful God, that a doubt arises which cannot be removed except by the conviction that God is true.[1] It can scarcely be said this is a *dignus vindice nodus*, or that God can fitly appear as a kind of second-best resource to the forgetful spirit which has lost its direct hold on truth and its faith in itself. God, truth, and the human spirit are thus conceived as having merely external and accidental relations with each other. What Des Cartes, however, is really expressing in this exoteric way is simply

[1] *Resp. quartæ*, 234.

that, beneath and beyond all particular truths, there lies the great general truth of the unity of thought and existence. In contemplating a particular truth, we may not consciously relate it to this unity, but when we have to defend it against scepticism we are forced to realise this relation. The ultimate answer to any attack upon a special aspect or element of truth must be to show that the fate of truth itself, the possibility of knowledge, is bound up with it, or, in other words, that we cannot doubt it without doubting reason itself. But to doubt reason is, in the language of Des Cartes, to doubt the truthfulness of God; for, in his view, the idea of God is involved in the very constitution of reason. Taken in this way, the import of Des Cartes's answer is, that the consciousness of self, like every other particular truth, is not at first seen to rest on the consciousness of God, but that when we realise what it means we see that it does so rest. But if this be so, then in making the consciousness of self his first principle of knowledge Des Cartes has stopped short of the truth. It can be the first principle only if it is understood, not as the consciousness of the individual self, but in a sense in which the

consciousness of self is identical with the consciousness of God.

Des Cartes, however, is far from a clear apprehension of the ultimate unity of thought and being, which, nevertheless, he strives to find in God. Beginning with an absolute separation of the *res cogitans* from the *res extensa*, he is continually falling back into dualism just when he seemed to have escaped from it. Even in God the absolute unity, idea and reality fall asunder; our idea of God is not God in us, it is only an idea of which God's existence is the cause. But the category of causality, if it forms a bridge between different things, as here between knowing and being, at the same time repels them from each other. It is a category of external relation, which may be adequate to express the relation of the finite to the finite, but not the relation of the finite to the infinite. We cannot conceive God simply as the cause of our idea of Him, without making God a purely objective and therefore finite existence.

Nor is the case better when we turn to the so-called ontological argument,—that existence is necessarily involved in the idea of God, just as

the property of having its angles equal to two right angles is involved in the idea of a triangle. If, indeed, we could take this as meaning that thought transcends the distinction between itself and existence, and that therefore existence cannot be a thing in itself out of thought, but must be an intelligible world that exists as such only for the thinking being, there would be some force in the argument. But this meaning we cannot find in Des Cartes, or to find it we must make him inconsistent with himself. He was so far from having quelled the phantom "thing in itself" that he treated matter in space as such a thing, and thus confused externality of space with externality to the mind. On this dualistic basis the ontological argument becomes a manifest paralogism, and lies open to all the objections that Kant brought against it. That the idea of God involves existence proves only that God, if He exists at all, exists by the necessity of His being. But the link that is to bind thought to existence is still wanting, and, in consistency with the other presuppositions of Des Cartes, it cannot be supplied.

But, again, even if we allow to Des Cartes that God is the unity of thought and being, we must

still ask what is the nature of this unity? Is it a mere generic unity, reached by abstraction, and which therefore leaves out of account all the distinguishing characteristics of the particulars under it? Or is it a concrete unity to which the particular elements are subordinated, but in which they are nevertheless included? To answer this question we need only look at the relation of the finite to the infinite, as it is expressed in the passage already quoted, and in many others. Des Cartes always speaks of the infinite as a purely affirmative or positive existence, and of the finite, in so far as it is distinguished from the infinite, as purely negative, or, in other words, as a nonentity, "I am," he says, "a mean between God and nothing, between the Supreme Being and not-being. In so far as I am created by God, there is nothing in me that can deceive me or lead me into error. But, on the other hand, if I consider myself as participating in nothingness, or not-being, inasmuch as I am not myself the Supreme Being, but in many ways defective, I find myself exposed to an infinity of errors. Thus error as such is not something real that depends on God, but simply a defect; I do not need to explain it by means of any special

faculty bestowed on me by God, but merely by the fact that the faculty for discerning truth from error with which He has endowed me, is not infinite."[1] But if we follow out this principle to its logical result, we must say not only that error is a consequence of finitude, but also that the very *existence* of the finite as such is an error or illusion. All finitude, all determination, according to the well-known Spinozistic aphorism, is negation, and negation cannot constitute reality. To know the reality of things, therefore, we have to abstract from their limits: therefore the only reality is the infinite. Finite being, *qua* finite, has no existence, and finite self-consciousness, consciousness of a self in opposition to, or limited by, a not-self is an illusion. But Des Cartes does not thus reason. He does not see "anything in the nature of the infinite which should exclude the existence of finite things." "What," he asks, "would become of the power of that imaginary infinite if it could create nothing? Perceiving in ourselves the power of thinking, we can easily conceive that there should be a greater intelligence elsewhere. And even if we should suppose that

[1] *Meditatio quarta.*

intelligence increased *ad infinitum*, we need not fear that our own would be lessened. And the same is true of all other attributes which we ascribe to God, even of His power, provided only that we do not suppose that the power in us is not subjected to God's will. In all points, therefore, He is infinite without any exclusion of created things."[1] The truth of this view we need not dispute; the question is as to its consistency with Cartesian principles. It may be a higher idea of God to conceive Him as revealing Himself in and to finite creatures; but it is a different idea from that which is implied in Des Cartes' explanations of error. It is an inconsistency that brings Des Cartes nearer to Christianity, and nearer, it may also be said, to a true metaphysic; but it is not the less an inconsistency with his fundamental principles, which must necessarily disappear in their subsequent development. To conceive the finite as not constituted merely by the absence of some of the positive elements of the infinite, but as in necessary unity with the infinite; to conceive the infinite as not merely that which has no limits, or determinations, but as that which is self-

[1] *Resp. ad. sec. object.*, p. 75.

determined and self-manifesting, which through all finitude and manifestation returns upon itself, may not be erroneous. But it would not be difficult to show that the adoption of such a conception involves the rejection or modification of almost every doctrine of the Cartesian system.

In connection with this inconsistency we may notice the very different relations in which Des Cartes conceives mind on the one side and matter on the other to stand towards God, who yet is the cause of both, and must therefore, by the principle of causality, contain in Himself all that is in both. Matter and mind are to Des Cartes absolute opposites. Whatever can be asserted of mind can be denied of matter, whatever can be asserted of matter can be denied of mind. Matter is passive, mind is active; matter is extended, and therefore divisible *ad infinitum*; mind is an indivisible unity. In fact, though of this Des Cartes is not conscious, the determination of the one is mediated by its opposition to the other; the ideas of object and subject, the self and not-self, are terms of a relation distinguishable but inseparable. But in the idea of God we must find a unity which transcends this difference in one way or another, whether by

combining the two under a higher notion, or, as it would be more natural to expect on Cartesian principles, by abstracting equally from the particular characteristics of both. Des Cartes really does neither, or rather he acts partly on the one principle and partly on the other. In his idea of God he abstracts from the properties of matter but not from those of mind. "God," he says, "contains in Himself *formaliter* all that is in mind, but only *eminenter* all that is in matter";[1] or, as he elsewhere expresses it more popularly, He *is* mind, but He is only the creator of matter. And for this Des Cartes gives as his reason that matter, as being divisible and passive, is essentially imperfect. *Ipsa natura corporis multas imperfectiones involvit,* and, therefore, "there is more analogy between sounds and colours than there is between material things and God." But the real imperfection here lies in the abstractness of the Cartesian conception of matter as merely extended, merely passive; and this is balanced by the equal abstractness of the conception of mind or self-consciousness as an absolutely simple activity, a pure intelligence without any object but itself. If matter as

[1] *Resp. ad. sec. object.*, 72-73.

absolutely opposed to mind is imperfect, mind as absolutely opposed to matter is also imperfect. In fact, they are the elements or factors of a unity, and lose all meaning when severed from each other, and if we are to seek this unity by abstraction, we must equally abstract from both.

The result of this one-sidedness is seen in the fact that Des Cartes, who begins by separating mind from matter, ends by finding the essence of mind in pure will, *i.e.*, in pure formal self-determination. Hence God's will is conceived as absolutely arbitrary, not determined by any end or law; for all laws, even the necessary truths that constitute reason, spring from God's determination, and do not precede it. "He is the author of the essence of things no less than their existence," and His will has no reason but His will. In man there is an intelligence with eternal laws or truths involved in its structure, which so far limits his will. "As man finds the nature of good and truth already determined by God, *his* will cannot be moved by anything else." His highest freedom consists in having his will determined by a clear perception of the nature of good and truth, and

"he is never indifferent except when he is ignorant of it, or, at least, does not see it so clearly as to be lifted above the possibility of doubt."[1] Indifference of will is to him "the lowest grade of liberty," yet, on the other hand, in nothing does the image of God in him show itself more clearly than in the fact that his will is not limited by his clear and distinct knowledge, but is "in a manner infinite." For "there is no object of any will, even the infinite will of God, to which our will does not extend."[2] Belief is a free act, for as we can yield our assent to the obscure conceptions presented by sense and the imagination, and thus allow ourselves to be led into error, so, on the other hand, we can refuse to give this assent, or to allow ourselves to be determined by anything but the clear and distinct ideas of intelligence. That which makes it possible for us to err is that also in which the divine image in us is most clearly seen. We cannot have the freedom of God, whose will creates the object of His knowledge; but in reserving our assent for the clear and distinct perceptions of intelligence we, as it were, re-enact for ourselves the divine law, and repeat, so far as is possible to finite beings, the

[1] *Resp. Sextæ*, 160-163. [2] *Principia*, i. 35.

transcendent act of will in which truth and good had their origin.

The inherent defect of this view is the divorce it makes between the form and the matter of intelligence. It implies that reason or self-consciousness is one thing, and that truth is another and quite different thing, which has been united to it by the arbitrary will of God. The same external conception of the relation of truth to the mind is involved in the doctrine of innate ideas. It is true that Des Cartes did not hold that doctrine in the coarse form in which it was attributed to him by Locke, but expressly declares that he has "never said or thought at any time that the mind required innate ideas which were separated from the faculty of thinking. He had simply used the word innate to distinguish those ideas which are derived from that faculty, and not from external objects or the determination of the will. Just as when we say generosity is innate in certain families, and in certain other diseases, like the gout or the stone, we do not mean to imply that infants in their mother's womb are affected with these complaints."[1] Yet Des Cartes, as we have

[1] *Notæ in Programma*, 184.

seen, does not hold that these truths are involved in the very nature of intelligence as such, so that we cannot conceive a self-conscious being without them. On the contrary, we are to regard the divine intelligence as by arbitrary act determining that two and two should be four, or that envy should be a vice. We are "*not* to conceive eternal truth flowing from God as rays from the sun."[1] In other words, we are not to conceive all particular truths as different aspects of one truth. It is part of the imperfection of man's finite nature that he "finds truth and good determined for him." It is something given,—given, indeed, along with his very faculty of thinking,—but still *given* as an external limit to it. It belongs not to his nature as spirit, but to his finitude as man.

After what has been said, it is obvious that the transition from God to matter must be somewhat arbitrary and external. God's truthfulness is pledged for the reality of that of which we have clear and distinct ideas; and we have clear and distinct ideas of the external world so long as we conceive it simply as extended matter, infinitely

[1] *Epistolæ*, i. 110.

divisible, and moved entirely from without,—so long, in short, as we conceive it as the direct opposite of mind, and do not attribute to it any one of the properties of mind. *Omnes proprietates, quas in ea clare percipimus, ad hoc unum reducuntur, quod sit partibilis et mobilis secundum partes.* We must, therefore, free ourselves from the obscure and confused modes of thought which arise whenever we attribute any of the secondary qualities, which exist merely in our sensations, to the objects that cause these sensations. The subjective character of such qualities is proved by the constant change which takes place in them, without any change of the object in which they are perceived. A piece of wax cannot lose its extension; but its colour, its hardness, and all the other qualities whereby it is presented to sense may be easily altered. What is objective in all this is merely an extended substance, and the modes of motion or rest through which it is made to pass. In like manner we must separate from our notion of matter all ideas of *actio in distans: e.g.*, we must explain weight not as a tendency to the centre of the earth or an attraction of distant particles of matter, but as a consequence of the pressure of other bodies, immediately sur-

rounding that which is felt to be heavy.[1] For the only conceivable *actio in distans* is that which is mediated by thought, and it is only in so far as we suppose matter to have in it a principle of activity like thought that we can accept such explanations of its motion. Again, while we must thus keep our conception of matter clear of all elements that do not belong to it, we must also be careful not to take away from it those that *do* belong to it. It is a defect of distinctness in our ideas when we conceive an attribute as existing apart from its substance, or a substance without its attribute; for this is to treat elements that are only separated by a "distinction of reason," as if they were distinct things. The conception of the possibility of a vacuum or empty space arises merely from our confusing the possible separation of any particular mode or form of matter from matter in general, with the impossible separation of matter in general from its own essential attribute. Accordingly, in his physical philosophy, Des Cartes attempts to explain everything on mechanical principles, starting with the hypothesis that a certain quantity of motion has been communicated to the material universe

[1] *Resp. Sextæ*, 165-6.

by God at the first, a quantity which can never be lost or diminished, and that space is an absolute plenum in which motion propagates itself in circles. It is unnecessary to follow Des Cartes into the detail of the theory of vortices. It is more to the purpose to notice the nature of the reasons by which he is driven to regard such a mechanical explanation of the universe as necessary. A real or substantive existence is, in his view, a *res completa*, a thing that can be conceived as a whole in itself without relations to any other thing. Now matter and mind are, he thinks, such complete existences, so long as we conceive them, as the pure intelligence must conceive them, as abstract opposites of each other ; and do not permit ourselves to be confused by those mixed modes of thought which are due to sense or imagination. Des Cartes does not see that in this very abstract opposition there is a bond of union between mind and matter, or, in other words, that they are correlative opposites, and therefore in their separation *res incompletæ*. In other words, they are merely elements of reality substantiated by abstract thought into independent realities. He indeed partly retracts his assertion that mind and matter severed from each other are *res completæ*, when he declares

that neither can be conceived as existing apart from God, and that therefore, strictly speaking, God alone is a substance. But as we have seen, he avoids the necessary inference that in God the opposition between mind and matter is reconciled or transcended, by conceiving God as abstract self-consciousness or will, and the material world not as His necessary manifestation, but simply as His creation, *i.e.*, as having its origin in an act of bare volition, and that only. His God is the God of abstract Monotheism and not of Christianity, and in relation to such a God, the world must be conceived as a foreign matter which He brings into being, and acts on from without, but in which He is not revealed.

It is a natural consequence of this view that nature is essentially *dead matter*, and that beyond the motion it has received from God at the beginning, and which it transmits from part to part without increase or diminution, it has in itself no principle of activity. Every trace of vitality in it must be explained away as a mere false reflection upon it of the nature of mind. The world is thus "cut in two with a hatchet," and there is no attraction to overcome the mutual repulsion of its severed parts. Nothing can be admitted in the material half that savours of self

determination, all its energy must be communicated, not self-originated; there is in it no room for gravitation, still less for magnetism or chemical affinity. *A fortiori*, animal life must be completely explained away. The machine may be very complicated, but it is still, and can be nothing but a machine. For if we once admitted that matter could be anything but mechanical, we should be on the way to admit that matter could become mind. When a modern physical philosopher declares that everything, even life and thought, is ultimately reducible to matter, we cannot always be certain that he means what he seems to say. Not seldom the materialist *soi-disant*, when we hear his account of the properties of matter, turns out to be something like a spiritualist in disguise; but when Des Cartes asserted that everything *but* mind is material, and that the animals are automata, there is no such dubiety of interpretation. He said what he meant, and meant what he said, in the hardest sense his words can bear. *His* matter was not even gravitating, much less living; it had no property except that of retaining and transmitting the motion received from without by pressure and impact. And *his* animals were automata, not merely in the sense

of being governed by sensation and instinct, but precisely in the sense that a watch is an automaton. Henry More cries out against the ruthless consequence with which he develops his principles to this result. "In this," he says, "I do not so much admire the penetrative power of your genius as I tremble for the fate of the animals. What I recognise in you is not only subtlety of thought, but a hard and remorseless logic with which you arm yourself as with a sword of steel, to take away life and sensation with one blow, from almost the whole animal kingdom." But Des Cartes was not the man to be turned from the legitimate result of his principles by a scream. "Nec moror astutias et sagacitates canum et vulpium, nec quæcunque alia propter cibum, venerem, aut metum a brutis fiunt. *Profiteor enim me posse perfacile illa omnia ut a sola membrorum conformatione profecta explicare.*"[1]

The difficulty reaches its height when Des Cartes

[1] *Epist.* i. 66, 67. Cf., however, the passages quoted by Mr. Martineau (*Types of Ethical Theory*, II. 138) which show that Des Cartes sometimes made concessions in relation to the sensitive life of animals similar to those which, as we shall immediately see, he makes in relation to the sensitive life of man, see especially *Œuvres*, ix. 423-53; x. 207 -8.

attempts to explain the union of the body and spirit in man. Between two substances which, when clearly and distinctly conceived, do not imply each other, there can be none but an artificial unity, —a unity of composition that still leaves them external to each other. Even God cannot make them one in any higher sense.[2] And as it is impossible in the nature of mind to see any reason why it should be embodied, or in the nature of matter to see any reason why it should become the organ of mind, the union of the two must be taken as a mere empirical fact. When we put on the one side all that belongs to intelligence, and on the other all that belongs to matter, there is a residuum in our ideas which we cannot reduce to either head. This residuum consists of our appetites, our passions, and our sensations, including not only the feelings of pain and pleasure, but also the perceptions of colour, smell, taste, of hardness and softness, and all the other qualities apprehended by touch. These must be referred to the union of mind with body. They are subjective in the sense that they give us no information either as to the nature of things or of mind. Their function is only to indicate what

[2] *Princ.* i. 60.

things are useful or hurtful to our composite nature as such, or, in other words, what things tend to confirm or dissolve the unity of mind and body. They indicate that *something* is taking place in our body or without it, and so stimulate us to some kind of action, but *what* it is that is taking place they do not tell us. There is no resemblance in the sensation of pain produced by great heat to the tension of the fibres of our body that causes it. But we do not need to know the real origin of our sensation to prevent us going too near the fire. Sensation leads us into error only when we are not conscious that its office is merely practical, and when we attempt to make objective judgments by means of its obscure and confused ideas, *e.g.*, when we say that there is heat in our hands or in the fire. And the remedy for this error is to be found simply in the clear conviction of the subjectivity of sensation.

These views of the nature of sense, however, at once force us to ask how Des Cartes can consistently admit that a subjective result such as sensation, a result in mind, should be produced by matter, and on the other hand how an objective result, a result in matter, should be effected by mind. Des Cartes explains at great length, accord-

ing to his modification of the physiology of the day, that the pineal gland, which is the immediate organ of the soul, is acted on by the nerves through the "animal spirits," and again by reaction upon these spirits produces motions in the body. It is an obvious remark that this explanation either materialises mind, or else puts for the solution the very problem to be solved. It was therefore in the spirit of Des Cartes, it was only making explicit what is involved in many of his expressions, when Geulincx, one of his earliest followers, formulated the theory of occasional causes. The general approval of the Cartesian school showed that this was a legitimate development of doctrine. Yet it tore away the last veil from the absolute dualism of the system, which had stretched the antagonism of mind and matter so far that no mediation remained possible, or, what is the same thing, so far that it remained possible only through an inexplicable will of God. The intrusion of such a *Deus ex machina* into philosophy only showed that by its violent abstraction philosophy had destroyed the unity of the known and intelligible world, and was, therefore, forced to seek that unity in the region of the unknown and unintelligible. If our light be darkness,

then in our darkness we must seek for light; if reason be contradictory in itself, truth must be found in unreason. The development of the Cartesian school was soon to show what is the necessary and inevitable consequence of such worship of the unknown.

To the ethical aspect of his philosophy, Des Cartes, unlike his great disciple, only devoted a subordinate attention. In a short treatise, however, he discussed the relation of reason to the passions. After we have got over the initial difficulty, that matter should give rise to effects in mind, and mind in matter, and have admitted that in man the unity of mind and body turns what in the animals is mere mechanical reception of stimulus from without and reaction upon it, into an action and reaction mediated by sensation, emotion, and passion, another question presents itself. How can the mere natural movement of passion, the nature of which is fixed by the original constitution of our body and of the things that act upon it, be altered or modified by pure reason? For while it is obvious that morality consists in the determination of reason by itself, it is not easy to conceive how the same being who is determined by passion from

without should also be determined by reason from within. How, in other words, can a spiritual being maintain its character as self-determined, or at least determined only by the clear and distinct ideas of the reason which are its innate forms, in the presence of this foreign element of passion that seems to make it the slave of external impressions? Is reason able to crush this intruder, or to turn it into a servant? Can the passions be annihilated, or can they be spiritualised?

Des Cartes could not properly adopt either alternative; he could not adopt the ethics of asceticism, for the union of body and mind is, in his view, natural; and hence the passions which are the results of that union are in themselves relatively good. They are provisions of nature for the protection of the unity of soul and body, and stimulate us to the acts necessary for that purpose. Yet, on the other hand, he could not admit that these passions are capable of being completely spiritualised; for so long as the unity of body and soul is regarded as merely external and accidental, it is impossible to think that the passions which arise out of this unity can be transformed into the embodiment and expression of reason. Des Cartes, indeed, points out

that every passion has a lower and a higher form, and while in its lower or primary form it is based on the obscure ideas produced by the motion of the animal spirits, in its higher form it is connected with the clear and distinct judgments of reason regarding good and evil. If, however, the unity of soul and body be a unity of composition, there is an element of obscurity in the judgments of passion which cannot be made clear, an element in desire which cannot be spiritualised. If the mind be external to the passions, it can only impose upon them an external rule of moderation. On such a theory no *ideal* morality is possible to man in his present state; for, in order to the attainment of such an ideal morality, it would be necessary that the accidental element, which is obtruded into his life as a spiritual being by his connection with the body, should be expelled. What can be attained under present conditions is only, to abstract so far as is possible from external things, and from those relations to external things into which passion brings us. Hence the great importance which Des Cartes attaches to the distinction between things in our power, and things not in our power. What is not in our power includes all outward things, and therefore it is our highest wisdom

to regard them as determined by an absolute fate or the eternal decree of God. We cease to wish for that which is seen to be impossible ; and therefore, in order to subdue our passions we only need to convince ourselves that no effort of ours can enable us to secure their objects. On the other hand, that which is within our power, and which therefore we cannot desire too earnestly, is virtue. But virtue in this abstraction from all objects of desire is simply the harmony of reason with itself, the ἀταραξία of the Stoic under a slight change of aspect. Thus in ethics, as in metaphysics, Des Cartes ends not with a reconciliation of the opposed elements, but with a dualism, or, at best, with a unity which is the result of abstraction.

Malebranche was prepared, by the ascetic training of the cloister and the teaching of Augustine, to bring to clear consciousness and expression many of the tendencies that were latent and undeveloped in the philosophy of Des Cartes. To use a chemical metaphor, the Christian Platonism of the church father was a medium in which Cartesianism could precipitate the product of its elements. Yet the medium was, as we shall see, not a perfect one, and

hence the product was not quite pure. Without metaphor, Malebranche, by his previous habits of thought, was well fitted to detect and develop the pantheistic and ascetic elements of his master's philosophy. But he was not well fitted to penetrate through the veil of popular language under which the discordance of that philosophy with orthodox Christianity was hidden. On the contrary, the whole training of the Catholic priest, and especially his practical spirit, with that tendency to compromise which a practical spirit always brings with it, enabled him to conceal from himself as well as from others the logical result of his principles. And we do not wonder even when we find him treating as a "wretched creature" (*miserable*) the philosopher who tore away the veil.

Malebranche "*saw all things in God.*" In other words, he taught that knowledge is possible only in so far as thought is the expression, not of the nature of the individual subject as such, but of a universal life in which he and all other rational beings partake. "No one can feel my individual pain; every one can see the truth which I contemplate—why is it so? The reason is that my pain is a modification of my substance, but truth is

the common good of all spirits."[1] This idea is ever present to Malebranche, and is repeated by him in an endless variety of forms of expression. Thus, like Des Cartes, but with more decision, he tells us that the idea of the infinite is prior to the idea of the finite. "We conceive of the infinite being by the very fact that we conceive of 'being,' without considering whether it be finite or no. But in order that we may think of a finite being, we must necessarily cut off or deduct something from the general notion of being, which consequently we must previously possess. Thus the mind does not apprehend anything whatever, except in and through the idea that it has of the infinite; nor is it the case that, as philosophers have maintained, this idea is formed by the confused assemblage of all the ideas of particular things. On the contrary, all these particular ideas are only participations in the general idea of the infinite, just as God does not derive His being from the creatures, but all the creatures are imperfect participations of the Divine Being."[2] Again, he tells us, in the same chapter, that "when we wish to think of any particular thing, we first cast our view

[1] *Morale*, i. 1, § 2. [2] *Recherche*, III. ii. 6.

upon all being, and then apply it to the consideration of the object in question. We could not desire to see any particular object, unless we saw it already in a confused and general way, and as there is nothing which we cannot desire to see, so all objects must be in a manner present to our spirit." Or, as he puts it in another place, "our mind would not be capable of representing to itself the general ideas of genera and species, if it did not see all things as contained in one; for, every creature being an individual, we cannot say that we are apprehending any created thing when we think the general idea of a triangle!"

The main idea that is expressed in all these different ways is simply this, that to determine any individual object as such, we must relate it to, and distinguish it from, the whole of which it is a part; and that, therefore, thought could never apprehend anything, if it did not bring with itself the idea of the intelligible world as a unity. Des Cartes had already expressed this truth in his *Meditations*, but he had deprived it of its full significance by making a distinction between the *being* and the *idea* of God, the former of which, in his view, was only the cause of the latter. Malebranche detects this error,

and denies that there is any idea of the infinite, which is a somewhat crude way of saying that there is no division between the idea of the infinite and its reality. What Reid asserted of the external world, that it is not represented by an idea in our minds, but is actually present to them, Malebranche asserted of God. No individual thing, he tells us—and an idea is but an individual thing—could represent the infinite. On the contrary, all individual things are represented through the infinite Being, who contains them all in His substance *très efficace, et par conséquence très intelligible*.[1] We know God by Himself, material things only by their ideas in God, for they are "unintelligible in themselves, and we can see them only in the being who contains them in an intelligible manner." And thus, unless we in some way "saw God, we should be able to see nothing else." The vision *of* God or *in* God, therefore, is an "intellectual intuition," in which seer and seen, knower and known, are one. Our knowledge of things is our participation in God's knowledge of them. When we have gone so far with Malebranche, we are tempted to ask why he does not follow out his thought to its natural conclusion.

[1] *Recherche*, III. ii. 6, 7.

If the idea of God is not separable from His existence, if it is through the idea of Him that all things are known, and through His existence that all things are, then it would seem necessarily to follow that our consciousness of God is but a part of God's consciousness of Himself, that our consciousness of self and other things is but God's consciousness of them, and lastly, that there is no existence either of ourselves or other things except in this consciousness. To understand Malebranche is mainly to understand how he stopped short of results that seemed to lie so directly in the line of his thought.

To begin with the last point, it is easy to see that Malebranche only asserts unity of idea and reality in God, in order to deny it everywhere else; which with him is equivalent to asserting it in general and denying it in particular. To him, as to Des Cartes, the opposition between mind and matter is absolute. Material things cannot come into our minds, nor can our minds go out of themselves *pour se promener dans les cieux*.[1] Hence they are in themselves absolutely unknown; they are known only in God, in whom are their ideas;

[1] *Recherche*, III. ii. 1.

and as these ideas are quite distinct from the reality, they "might be presented to the mind without anything existing." That they exist *out of* God in another manner than the intelligible manner of their existence *in* God, is explained by a mere act of His will, that is, it is not explained at all. Though we see all things in God, therefore, there is no connection between His existence and theirs. The "world is not a necessary emanation of divinity; God is perfectly self-sufficient, and the idea of the infinitely perfect Being can be conceived quite apart from any other. The existence of the creatures is due to the free decrees of God."[1] Malebranche, therefore, still treats of external things as "things in themselves," which have an existence apart from thought, even the divine thought, though it is only in and through the divine thought they can be known by us. "To see the material world, or rather to judge that it exists (since in itself it is invisible), it is necessary that God should reveal it to us, for we cannot see the result of His arbitrary will through necessary reason."[2]

But if we know external things only through their idea in God, how do we know ourselves? Is

[1] *Morale*, I. i. § 5. [2] *Entretien*, I. § 5.

it also through the idea of us in God? Here we come upon a point in which Malebranche diverges very far from his master. We do not, he says, properly *know* ourselves at all, as we know God, or even external objects. We are conscious of ourselves by inner sense (*sentiment intérieur*), and from this we know *that* we are, but we do not know *what* we are. "We know the existence of our soul more distinctly than of our body, but we have not so perfect a knowledge of our soul as of our body." This is shown by the fact that from our idea of body as extended substance, we can at once see what are its possible modifications. In other words, we only need the idea of extended substance to see that there is an inexhaustible number of figures and motions of which it is capable. The whole of geometry is but a development of what is given already in the conception of extension. But it is not so with our consciousness of self, which does not enable us to say, prior to actual experience, what sensations or passions are possible to us. We only know what heat, cold, light, colour, hunger, anger, and desire are by feeling them. Our knowledge extends as far as our experience and no further. Nay, we have good reason to believe that

many of these modifications exist in our soul only by reason of its accidental association with a body, and that, if it were freed from that body, it would be capable of far other and higher experiences. "We know by feeling that our soul is great, but perhaps we know almost nothing of what it is in itself." The information which sense gives has, as Des Cartes taught, only a practical but no theoretical value; it tells us nothing of the external world, the real nature of which we know, not through touch and taste and sight, but only through our idea of extended substance; while of the nature of the soul it does not tell us much more than that it exists, and that it is not material. And in this latter case we have no idea, nothing better than sense to raise us above its illusions.

It is clear from these statements that by self-consciousness Malebranche means consciousness of desires and feelings, which belong to the individual as such, and not consciousness of the self as thinking. He begins, in fact, where Des Cartes ended, and identifies the consciousness of self as thinking, and so transcending the limits of its own particular being, with the consciousness or idea of God. And between the consciousness of the finite in sense, and

the consciousness of the infinite in thought, or in other words, between the consciousness of the universal and the consciousness of the individual, he sees no connection. Malebranche is just one step from the pantheistic conclusion that the consciousness of finite individuality as such is illusory, and that as all bodies are but modes of one infinite extension, so all souls are but modes of one infinite thought. But while he willingly accepts this result in regard to matter, his religious feelings prevent him from accepting it in relation to mind. He is driven, therefore, to the inconsistency of holding that sense and feeling, through which in his view we apprehend the finite as such, give us true though imperfect knowledge of the soul, while the knowledge they give us of body is not only imperfect but false.[1] Thus the finite spirit is still allowed to be a substance, distinct from the infinite, though it holds its substantial existence on a precarious tenure. It is left hanging, we may say, on the verge of the infinite, whose attraction must soon prove too strong for it. Ideas are living things, and often remould the minds that admit them in spite of the greatest resistance of dead custom and

[1] *Recherche*, III. ii. 7, § 4.

traditionary belief. In the grasp of a logic that overpowers him, the more easily that he is unconscious of its tendency, Malebranche is brought within one step of the pantheistic conclusion, and all that his Christian feeling and priestly training can do, is *just* to save him from the denial of the personality of man.

But even this denial is not the last word of pantheism. When the principle that the finite is known only in relation to the infinite, the individual only in relation to the universal, is interpreted as meaning that the infinite and universal is complete in itself without the finite and individual, and when the finite and individual is treated as a mere accidental existence due to the "arbitrary will of God," it ceases to be possible to conceive even God as a spirit. Did Malebranche realise what he was saying when he declared that God was "being in general," but not any particular being? At any rate we can see that the same logic which leads him almost to deny the reality of finite beings, leads him also to seek the divine nature in something more abstract and general even than thought. If we must abstract from all relation to the finite in order to know God as He is, is it not necessary for

us also to abstract from self-consciousness? For self-consciousness also has a negative element in it; it is something definite and therefore limited. We do not wonder, therefore, when we find Malebranche saying that reason does not tell us that God is a spirit, but only that He is an infinitely perfect being. He is conceived as a spirit rather than as a body only, because spirit is more perfect than body. "When we call God a spirit, it is not so much to show positively what He is, as to signify that He is not material." But as we ought not to give Him a bodily form like man's, so we ought not to think of His spirit as similar to our own spirits, although we can conceive nothing more perfect. "It is necessary rather to believe that as He contains in Himself the properties of matter without being material, so He comprehends in Himself the perfections of created spirits without being like any spirit we can conceive, and that His true name is "He who is," *i.e.*, Being without restriction, Being infinite and universal."[1]

Thus the essentially self-revealing God of Christianity gives way to pure spirit, and pure spirit in its turn to the eternal and incomprehensible sub-

[1] *Recherche*, III. ii. 9.

stance, of which we can say nothing but that it is. The divine substance contains in itself, indeed, all the elements that are in creation, but it contains them *eminenter*, in some incomprehensible form that is reconcilable with its infinitude. But we have no adequate name by which to call it except Being. The curious metaphysic of theology by which, in his later writings, Malebranche tried to make room for the incarnation, by supposing that the finite creation, which *as* finite is unworthy of God, was made worthy by union with Christ, the divine Word, shows that Malebranche had some indistinct sense of the necessity of reconciling his philosophy with his theology; but it shows also the necessarily artificial nature of the combination. The result of the union of such incongruous elements was something which the theologians at once recognised as heterodox, and the philosophers as illogical.

There was another doctrine of Malebranche which brought him into trouble with the theologians, and which was the main subject of his long controversy with Arnauld. This was his denial of particular providence. As Leibniz maintained that this is the best of all possible worlds, and that its evils are to be explained by the negative nature of the

finite, so Malebranche, with a slight difference of expression, derived evil from the nature of particular or individual existence. It is not conformable to the nature of God to act by any but universal laws, and these universal laws necessarily involve particular evil consequences, though their ultimate result is the highest possible good. The question why there should be any particular existence, any existence *but* God, seeing such existence necessarily involves evil, remains insoluble so long as the purely pantheistic view of God is maintained; and it is this view which is really at the bottom of the assertion that He can have no particular volitions. To the coarse and anthropomorphic conception of particular providence Malebranche may be right in objecting; but, on the other hand, it cannot be doubted that any theory in which the universal is absolutely opposed to the particular, the infinite to the finite, is unchristian as well as unphilosophical. For under this dualistic presupposition, there seem to be only two possible alternatives open to thought; *either* the particular and finite must be treated as something independent of the universal and infinite, which involves an obvious contradiction, *or* else it must be regarded as absolute nonentity. We find

Malebranche doing the one or the other as occasion requires. Thus he vindicates the freedom of man's will on the ground that the universal will of God does not completely determine the particular volitions of man; and then, becoming conscious of the difficulty involved in this conception, he tries, like Des Cartes, to explain the particular will as something merely negative, a defect, and not a positive existence.

But to understand fully Malebranche's view of freedom and the ethical system connected with it, we must notice an important alteration which he makes in the Cartesian theory of the relation of will and intelligence. To Des Cartes, as we have seen, the ultimate essence of mind lay in pure abstract self-determination or will, and hence he based even moral and intellectual truth on the arbitrary decrees of God. With Malebranche, abstraction goes a step further; and the absolute is sought, not in the subject as opposed to the object, not in pure formal self-determination as opposed to that which is determined, but in a unity that transcends this difference. With him, therefore, will ceases to be regarded as the essence of intelligence, and sinks into a property or separable

attribute of it. As we can conceive an extended substance without actual movement, so, he says, we can conceive a thinking substance without actual volition. But "matter or extension without motion would be entirely useless and incapable of that variety of forms for which it is made; and we cannot, therefore, suppose, that an all-wise Being would create it in this way. In like manner, if a spiritual or thinking substance were without will, it is clear that it would be quite useless, for it would not be attracted towards the objects of its perception, and would not love the good for which it is made. We cannot therefore conceive an intelligent being so to fashion it."[1] Now God need not be conceived as creating at all, for He is self-sufficient; but if He be a creator of spirits, He must create them for Himself. "God cannot will that there should exist a spirit that does not love Him, or that loves Him less than any other good."[2] The craving for good in general, for an absolute satisfaction, is a *natural* love of God that is common to all. "The just, the wicked, the blessed, and the damned all alike love God with this love." Out of this love of God arises the love we have to ourselves and to

[1] *Recherche*, I. i. 1. [2] *Ibid.* I. i. 4.

others, which are the *natural inclinations* that belong to all created spirits. For these inclinations are but the elements of the love which is in God, and which therefore he inspires in all his creatures. "*Il s'aime, il nous aime, il aime toutes ses créatures; il ne fait donc point d'esprits qu'il ne les porte à l'aimer, à s'aimer, et à aimer toutes les créatures.*"[1] Stripping this thought of its theological vesture, what is expressed here is simply that, as a spiritual being, each man is conscious of his own limited and individual existence, as well as of the limited and individual existence of other beings like himself, only in relation to the whole in which they are parts. Hence he can find his own good only in the good of the whole, and he is in contradiction with himself so long as he rests in any good short of that. His love of happiness, his natural inclinations both selfish and social, may be therefore regarded as an undeveloped form of the love of God; and the ideal state of his inclinations is that in which the love of self and of others are explicitly referred to that higher affection; or in which his love does not proceed from a part to the whole, but from the whole to the parts.

[1] *Recherche*, I. iv. 1.

The question of morals to Malebranche is the question how these *natural inclinations* are related to the particular passions. Sensation and passion arise out of the connection of body and soul, and their use is only to urge us to attend to the wants of the former. We can scarcely hear without a smile the simple monastic legend which Malebranche weaves together about the original nature of the passions and their alteration by the Fall. "It is a manifest indication of disorder that a spirit, capable of knowing and loving God, should be obliged to occupy itself with the needs of the body." "A being altogether occupied with what passes in his body and with the infinity of objects that surround it, cannot be thinking on the things that are truly good."[1] Hence the necessity of an immediate and instinctive warning from the senses in regard to the relations of things to our organism, and also of pains and pleasures which may induce us to attend to this warning. "Sensible pleasure is the mark that nature has attached to the use of certain things in order that, without having the trouble of examining them by reason, we may employ them for the preservation of the body, but not in order that we may

[1] *Entretien*, iv.

love them."[1] Till the Fall the mind was merely united to the body, not subjected to it, and the influence of these pleasures and pains was only such as to make men attend to their bodily wants, but not to occupy the mind, or fill it with sensuous joys and sorrows, or trouble its contemplation of that which is really good. Our moral aim should therefore be to restore this state of things, to weaken our union with the body and strengthen our union with God. And to encourage us in pursuing this aim we have to remember that union with God is natural to the spirit, and that, while even the condition of union with the body is artificial, the condition of subjection to the body is wholly unnatural to it. Our primary tendency is towards the supreme good, and we love the objects of our passions only in so far as we "determine towards particular, and therefore false goods, the love that God gives us for himself." The search for happiness is really the search for God in disguise, and even the levity and inconstancy with which men rush from one finite good to another, is a proof that they were made for the infinite. Furthermore, this natural love of God, or inclination for good in general, "gives us the power

[1] *Recherche*, v. 4.

of suspending our consent in regard to those particular goods which do not satisfy it."[1] If we refuse to be led by the obscure and confused voice of instinctive feeling, which arises from and always tends to confirm our union with the body, and if we wait for the light of reason which arises from our union with God, and always tends to confirm it, we are doing all that is in our power, and the rest must be left to God. "If we only judge precisely of that which we see clearly, we shall never be deceived. For then it will not be we that judge, but the universal reason that judges in us."[2] And as our love, even of particular goods, is a confused love of the supreme good, so the clear vision of God inevitably brings with it the love of Him. "We needs must love the highest when we see it." When it is the divine reason that speaks in us, it is the divine love that moves us, "the same love wherewith God loves Himself and the things He has made."[3]

The general result of the ethics of Malebranche is ascetic. The passions, like the senses, have no relation to the higher life of the soul; their value is only in relation to the union of soul and body, a

[1] *Recherche*, iv. 1. [2] *Morale*, I. i. § 9.
[3] *Recherche*, iv. 5.

union which is purely accidental or due to the arbitrary will of God. As Pericles said of women that the less they were heard of in public for good or evil the better, so Malebranche would say of the sensations and passions, that the more silently they discharge their provisional function, and the less they disturb or interfere with the pure activity of spirit, the more nearly they approach to the only perfection that is possible for them. Their ideal state is to remain or become again simple instincts that act mechanically like the circulation of the blood. The universal light of reason casts no ray into the obscurity of sense; its universal love cannot embrace any of the objects of particular passion. It is indeed recognised by Malebranche that sensation in man is mixed with thought, that the passions in him are forms of the love of good in general. But this union of the rational with the sensuous nature is regarded merely as a confusion which is to be cleared up, *not* in a higher unity of the two elements, but simply by the withdrawal of the spirit from contact with that which darkens and defiles it. Of a transformation of sense into thought, of passion into duty,—an elevation of the life of sense which turns it into the embodiment

and expression of the life of reason,—Malebranche has no conception.

Hence the life of reason turns with him to mysticism in theory and to asceticism in practice. His universal is abstract and opposed to the particular; instead of explaining, it explains it away. A certain tender beauty as of twilight is spread over the world as we view it through the eyes of this cloistered philosopher, and we do not at first see that the softness and ideality of the picture is due to the gathering darkness. Abstraction seems only to be purifying and not destroying, till it has done its perfect work. Malebranche conceived himself to be presenting to the world only the purest and most refined expression of Christian ethics and theology. But if we obey his own continual advice to think clearly and distinctly, if we divest his system of all the sensuous and imaginative forms in which he has clothed it, and reduce it to the naked simplicity of its central thought, what we find is not a God that reveals Himself in the finite and to the finite, but an absolute Substance which has no revelation, and whose existence is the negation of all but itself. To tear away the veil, however, there was needed a stronger, simpler, and freer

spirit,—a spirit less influenced by opinion, less inclined to practical compromise, and gifted with a stronger "faith in the whispers of the lonely muse" of speculation, than Malebranche.

It is a remark of Hegel's that SPINOZA, as a Jew, first brought into European thought the idea of an absolute unity in which the difference of finite and infinite is lost. Some later writers have gone further, and attempted to show that the main doctrines by which his philosophy is distinguished from that of Des Cartes were due to the direct influences of Jewish writers like Maimonides, and Chasdai Creskas, rather than to the necessary development of Cartesian ideas. And it is undoubtedly true that many points of similarity with such writers, reaching down even to verbal coincidence, may be detected in the works of Spinoza, although it is not so easy to determine how much he owed to their teaching. His own view of his obligations is sufficiently indicated by the fact that, while in his ethics he carries on a continual polemic against Des Cartes, and strives at every point to show that his own doctrines are legitimately derived from Cartesian principles, he only

once refers to Jewish philosophy as containing an obscure and unreasoned anticipation of these doctrines." "*Quod quidam Hebræorum quasi per nebulam vidisse videntur, qui scilicet statuunt Deum Dei intellectum resque ab ipso intellectas unum et idem esse.*"[1] It may be that the undeveloped pantheism and rationalism of the Jewish philosophers had a deeper influence upon Spinoza than he himself was aware of, particularly in emancipating him from the traditions of the synagogue, and giving to his mind its first philosophical bias. In his earlier work, *De Deo et Homini*, there are Neo-Platonic ideas and expressions, which in the *Ethics* are rejected or remoulded into a form more suitable to the spirit of Cartesianism. But the question, after all, has little more than a biographical interest. In the Spinozistic philosophy there are few differences from Des Cartes which cannot be traced to the necessary development of Cartesian principles; and the case of Malebranche shows that the development might take place under the most diverse intellectual conditions. What is most remarkable in Spinoza is just the freedom and security with which these principles are followed out to their last result. His

[1] *Eth.* ii. Prop. 7.

Jewish origin and his breach with Judaism completely isolated him from every influence but that of the thought that possessed him. And no scruple or hesitation, no respect for the institutions or feelings of his time, interfered with the speculative development of his principles. He exhibits to us the almost perfect type of a mind without superstitions, which has freed itself from all but reasoned and intelligent convictions, or, in the Cartesian phrase, "clear and distinct ideas"; and when he fails, it is not by any inconsistency, or abitrary stopping short of the necessary conclusions of his logic, but by the essential defect of his principles.

Spinoza takes his idea of method from mathematics, and after the manner of Euclid, places at the head of each book of his *Ethics* a certain number of definitions, axioms, and postulates, which are supposed to be intuitively certain, and to form a sufficient basis for all that follows. Altogether there are twenty-seven definitions, twenty axioms, and eight postulates. If Spinoza is regarded as the most consequent of philosophers, it cannot be because he has based his system upon so many fragmentary views of truth; it must be because a deeper unity has been discerned in the system than

is visible on the first aspect of it. We must, therefore, to a certain extent distinguish between the form and the matter of his thought, though it is also true that the defective form itself involves a defect in the matter.

What in the first instance recommends the geometrical method to Spinoza is, not only its apparent exactness and the necessity of its sequence, but, so to speak, its disinterestedness. Confusion of thought arises from the fact that we put ourselves, our desires and feelings and interests, into our view of things; that we do not regard them as they are in themselves in their essential nature, but look for some final cause, that is, for some relation to ourselves, by which they may be explained. For this reason, he says, "the truth might for ever have remained hid from the human race, if mathematics, which looks not to the final cause of figures, but to their essential nature and the properties involved in it, had not set another type of knowledge before them." To understand things is to see how all that is true of them flows from the clear and distinct idea expressed in their definition, and ultimately, it is to see how all truth flows from the *essentia Dei*, just as geometrical truth flows from

the idea of space. To take a mathematical view of the universe, therefore, is to raise ourselves above all consideration of the end or tendency of things, above the fears and hopes of mortality, into the region of truth and necessity. "When I turned my mind to this subject," he says in the beginning of his treatise on Politics, "I did not propose to myself any novel or strange aim, but simply to demonstrate by certain and indubitable reason those things which agree best with practice. And in order that I might inquire into the matters of this science with the same freedom of mind with which we are wont to treat lines and surfaces in mathematics, I determined not to laugh or to weep over the actions of men, but simply to understand them; and to contemplate their affections and passions, such as love, hate, anger, envy, arrogance, pity, and all other disturbances of soul, not as vices of human nature, but as properties pertaining to it, in the same way as heat, cold, storm, thunder pertain to the nature of the atmosphere. For these, though troublesome, are yet necessary, and have certain causes through which we may come to understand them, and thus, by contemplating them in their truth, gain for our minds as much joy as by the

knowledge of things that are pleasing to the senses." All our errors as to the nature of things arise from our judging them from the point of view of the part and not of the whole, from a point of view determined by their relation to our own individual being, and not from a point of view determined by the nature of the things themselves; or, to put the same thing in another way, from the point of view of sense and imagination, and not from the point of view of intelligence. The science of mathematics shows us the inadequacy of such knowledge, when it takes us out of ourselves into things, and when it presents these things to us as objects of universal intelligence apart from all special relation to our individual feelings. And Spinoza only wishes that the same universality and freedom of thought, which belongs to mathematics, because its objects *do not* interest the passions, should be extended to those objects that *do* interest them. The first condition of the philosopher's being is to free his mind from subjective interests, and to get beyond the illusion of sense and passion, which makes our own lives so supremely important and interesting to us simply because they are our own. He must look at what is immediately present to him as it were

through an inverted telescope of reason, which reduces it to its due proportion and place in the sum of things. To the heat of passion and the higher heat of imagination, Spinoza has only one advice: "Acquaint yourself with God and be at peace. Look not to the particular but to the universal, view things not under the form of the finite and temporal, but *sub quadam specie æternitatis*."

The illusion of the finite, the illusion of sense, imagination, and passion,—which, in Bacon's language, tends to make men judge of things *ex analogia hominis* and not *ex analogia universi*, which raises the individual life, and even the present moment of the individual life with its passing feelings, into a standard for measuring the universe,—this, in the eyes of Spinoza, is the source of all error and evil to man. On the other hand, his highest good is to live the universal life of reason, or, what is the same thing, to view all things from their centre in God, and to be moved only by the passion for good in general, "the intellectual love of God." In the treatise *De Emendatione Intellectus*, Spinoza takes up this contrast in the first instance from its moral side. "All our felicity or infelicity is founded on the nature of the object to which we

are joined by love." To love the things that perish is to be in continual trouble and disturbance of passion; it is to be full of envy and hatred towards others who possess them: it is to be ever striving after that which, when we attain it, does not satisfy us; or lamenting over the loss of that which inevitably passes away from us; only "love to an object which is infinite and eternal feeds the soul with a changeless and unmingled joy." But, again, our love rests upon our knowledge; if we saw things as they really are, we should love only the highest object. It is because sense and imagination give to the finite an independence and substantiality that do not belong to it, that we waste our love upon it as if it were infinite. And as the first step towards truth is to understand our error, Spinoza proceeds to explain the defects of common-sense, or, in other words, of that first and unreflected view of the world, which he, like Plato, calls *opinion*. Opinion is a kind of knowledge derived partly from hearsay, and partly from *experientia vaga*. It consists of vague and general conceptions of things, got either from the report of others or from an experience which has not received any special direction from intelligence.

The mind that has not got beyond the stage of opinion, takes things as they present themselves in its individual experience; and its beliefs grow up by association of whatever happens to have been found together in that experience. And as the combining principle of the elements of opinion is individual and not universal, so its conception of the world is at once fragmentary and accidental. It does not see things in their connection with the unity of the whole, and hence it cannot see them in their true relation to each other. "I assert expressly," says Spinoza, "that the mind has no adequate conception either of itself or of external things, but only a confused knowledge of them, so long as it perceives them only in the common order of nature, *i.e.*, so long as it is *externally* determined to contemplate this or that object by the way in which it happens to present itself in experience, and so long as it is not *internally* determined, by the unity of thought in which it considers a number of things, to understand their agreements, differences, and contradictions."[1]

There are two kinds of errors which are usually supposed to exclude each other, but which Spinoza

[1] *Eth.* i. 29 Schol.

finds to be united in opinion. These are the errors of abstraction and imagination; the former exhibits its vice by defect, the latter its vice by excess. On the one hand, opinion is abstract and one-sided; it is defective in knowledge and takes hold of things only at one point. On the other hand, and just because of this abstractness and one-sidedness, it is forced to give an artificial completeness and independence to that which is essentially fragmentary and dependent. The word abstract is misleading, in so far as we are wont to associate with abstraction the idea of a mental effort by which parts are separated from a given whole; but it may be applied without violence to any imperfect conception, in which things that are really elements of a greater whole are treated as if they were *res completæ*, independent objects, complete in themselves. And in this sense the ordinary consciousness of man is often the victim of abstractions, when it supposes itself most of all to be dealing with realities. For, although the essences and substances of the schoolman may delude him, he cannot think these notions clearly, without seeing that they are only abstract elements of reality, and that they have a meaning only in

relation to the other elements of it. But common sense remains unconscious of its abstractness, because imagination gives a kind of substantiality to the fragmentary and limited, and so makes it possible to conceive it as an independent reality. Pure intelligence, seeing the part as it is in itself, could never see it but as a part. Thought, when it rises to clearness and distinctness in regard to any finite object, must at once discern its relation to other finite objects and to the whole, —must discern, in Spinozistic language, that it is "modal" and not "real." But though it is not possible to *think* the part as a whole, it is possible to picture it as a whole. The limited image that fills the mind's eye seems to need nothing else for its reality. We cannot think a house clearly and distinctly in all the connection of its parts with each other, without seeing its necessary relation to the earth on which it stands, to the pressure of the atmosphere, etc. The very circumstances by which the possibility of such an existence is explained, make it impossible to conceive it apart from other things. But nothing hinders my mind from resting on a house by itself as a complete picture. Imagination represents things in the exter-

nality of space and time, and is subjected to no other conditions except those of space and time. Hence it can begin anywhere, and stop anywhere. For the same cause it can mingle and confuse together all manner of inconsistent forms—can imagine a man with a horse's head, a candle blazing in vacuo, a speaking tree, a man changed into an animal. There may be elements in the nature of these things that would prevent such combinations; but these elements are not necessarily present to the ordinary consciousness, the abstractness of whose conceptions leaves it absolutely at the mercy of imagination or accidental association. To thought in this stage anything is possible that can be pictured. On the other hand, as knowledge advances, this freedom of combination becomes limited. "The less the mind understands and the more it perceives, the greater is its power of fiction: and the more it understands, the narrower is the limitation of that power. For just as, in the moment of consciousness, we cannot imagine that we do not think, so, when once we have apprehended the nature of body, we cannot conceive of a fly of infinite size, and when once we know the nature of a soul, we cannot think of it as a square,

though we may use the words that express these ideas."[1] Thus, according to Spinoza, the range of possibility narrows as knowledge widens, until to perfected knowledge possibility is lost in necessity.

From these considerations, it follows that all thought is imperfect which stops short of the absolute unity of all things. Our first imperfect notion of things, as isolated from each other or connected only by co-existence and succession, is a mere imagination of them. It is a fictitious substantiation of isolated moments which in reality cannot exist apart. Knowledge, so far as it deals with the finite, is engaged in a continual process of self-correction which can never be completed; for at every step there is an element of falsity, in so far as the mind rests in the contemplation of a certain number of the elements of the world, as if they constituted a complete whole by themselves, whereas they are only a part, the conception of which has to be modified at the next step by considering its relation to the other parts. Thus we rise from individuals of the first to individuals of the second order, and we cannot stop short of the idea of "all nature as one individual whose

[1] *De Emend.* viii. § 58.

parts vary through an infinite number of modes, without change of the whole individual."[1] At first we think of pieces of matter as independent individuals, either because we can picture them separately, or because they preserve a certain proportion or relation of parts through their changes. But on further consideration, these apparent substances sink into modes, each of which is dependent on all the others. All nature is bound together by necessary law, and not an atom could be other than it is, without the change of the whole world. Hence it is only in the whole world that there is any true individuality or substance. And the same principle applies to the minds of men. Their individuality is a mere semblance caused by our abstracting from their conditions. Isolate the individual man, and he will not display the character of a thinking being at all. His whole spiritual life is bound up with his relations to other minds, past and present. He has such a life only in and through that universal life, of which he is so infinitesimal a part that his own contribution to it is as good as nothing. "*Vis qua homo in existendo perseverat*

[1] *Eth.* ii. Lemma 7, Schol.

limitata est, et a potentia causarum externarum infinite superatur."[1] What can be called his own? His body is a link in a cyclical chain of movement which involves all the matter of the world, and which as a whole remains without change through all change of the parts. His mind is a link in a great movement of thought, which makes him the momentary organ and expression of one of its phases. His very consciousness of self is marred by a false abstraction, above which he must rise ere he can know himself as he really is.

"Let us imagine," says Spinoza in his fifteenth letter, "a little worm living in blood, which has vision enough to discern the particles of blood, lymph, etc., and reason enough to observe how one particle is repelled by another with which it comes into contact, or communicates a part of its own motion to it. Such a worm would live in the blood as we do in this part of the universe, and would regard each particle of it, not as a part, but as a whole, nor could it know how all the parts are influenced by the universal nature of the blood, and are obliged to accommodate themselves to each other according to a fixed law.

[1] *Eth.* iv. 3.

For if we suppose that there are no causes outside of the blood which could communicate new motions to it, and no space beyond the blood, nor any other bodies to which its particles could transfer their motion, it is certain that the blood as a whole would always maintain its present state, and its particles would suffer no other variations than those which may be inferred from the given relation of the motion of blood to lymph, chyle, etc. And thus the blood would require to be considered always as a whole and not as a part. But since there are many other causes which influence the laws of the nature of blood, and are in turn influenced thereby, other motions and other variations must arise in the blood which are not due to the reciprocal relation of the motion of its parts, but also to the relation between that motion and external causes. And therefore we cannot consider the blood as a whole, but only as a part of a greater whole."

"Now we can think, and indeed ought to think, of all natural bodies in the same manner in which we have thought of this blood, for all bodies are surrounded by other bodies, and reciprocally determine and are determined by them to exist and

operate in a fixed and definite way, so as to preserve the same ratio of motion and rest in the whole universe. Hence it follows that every body, in so far as it exists under a certain definite modification, ought to be considered as merely a part of the whole universe, which agrees with its whole, and thereby is in intimate union with all the other parts; and since the nature of the universe is not limited like that of the blood, but absolutely infinite, it is clear that by this nature with its infinite powers, the parts are modified in an infinite number of ways, and compelled to pass through an infinity of variations. Moreover, when I think of the universe as a substance, I conceive of a still closer union of each part with the whole; for, as I have elsewhere shown, it is the nature of substance to be infinite, and therefore every single part belongs to the nature of the corporeal substance, so that apart therefrom it neither can exist nor be conceived. And as to the human mind, I think of it also as a part of nature; for I think of nature as having in it an infinite power of thinking, which, as infinite, contains in itself the idea of all nature, and whose thoughts run parallel with all existence."

From this point of view it is obvious that our knowledge of things cannot be real and adequate, except in so far as it is determined by the idea of the whole, and proceeds from the whole to the parts. A knowledge that proceeds from part to part must always be imperfect; it must remain external to its object, it must deal in abstractions or mere *entia rationis*, which it may easily be led to mistake for realities. Hence Spinoza, like Plato, distinguishes *ratio*, whose movement is regressive (from effect to cause, from variety to unity), from *scientia intuitiva*, whose movement is progressive, which "proceeds from the adequate idea of certain of God's attributes to an adequate knowledge of the nature of things."[1] The latter alone deserves to be called science in the highest sense of the term. For "in order that our mind may correspond to the exemplar of nature, it must develop all its ideas from the idea which represents the origin and source of nature, so that that idea may appear as the source of all other ideas."[2] The regressive mode of knowledge has its highest value in preparing for the progressive. The knowledge of the finite, ere it can become perfectly adequate, must

[1] *Eth.* ii. 40, Schol. 2. [2] *De Emend.* vii. § 42.

be absorbed and lost in the knowledge of the infinite. In a remarkable passage in the *Ethics*, Spinoza declares that the defect of the common consciousness of men lies not so much in their ignorance, either of the infinite or of the finite, as in their incapacity for bringing the two thoughts together, so as to put the latter in its proper relation to the former. All are ready to confess that God is the cause both of the existence and of the nature of things created, but they do not realize what is involved in this confession. Hence they treat created things as if they were substances, that is, as if they were Gods. "Thus while they are contemplating finite things, they think of nothing less than of the divine nature: and again when they turn to consider the divine nature, they think of nothing less than of their former fictions on which they have built up the knowledge of finite things, as if these things could contribute nothing to our understanding of the divine nature. Hence it is not wonderful that they are always contradicting themselves."[1] As Spinoza says elsewhere, it belongs to the very nature of the human mind to know God; for, if we

[1] *Eth.* ii. 10, Schol. 2.

did not know God, we could not know anything else. The idea of the absolute unity is involved in the idea of every particular thing; but the generality of men, deluded by sense and imagination, are unable to bring this implication into clear consciousness, and hence their knowledge of God does not modify their view of the finite. It is the business of philosophy to correct this defect, to transform our conceptions of the finite by relating it to the infinite, to complement and complete the partial knowledge produced by individual experience by bringing it into connection with the idea of the whole. And the vital question which Spinoza himself prompts us to ask is, how far and in what way this transformation is effected in the Spinozistic philosophy.

There are two great steps in the transformation of knowledge by the idea of unity as that idea is conceived by Spinoza. The first step involves a change of the conception of individual finite things, by which they lose their individuality, their character as independent substances, and come to be regarded as modes of the infinite. But secondly, this negation of the finite as such is not conceived as implying the

negation of the distinction between mind and matter. Mind and matter still retain that absolute opposition which they had in the philosophy of Des Cartes, even after all limits have been removed. And therefore in order to reach the absolute unity, and transcend the Cartesian dualism, a second step is necessary, by which the independent substantiality of mind and matter is withdrawn, and they are reduced into attributes of the one infinite substance. Let us examine these steps successively.

The method by which the finite is reduced into a mode of the infinite has already been partially explained. Spinoza follows to its legitimate result the metaphysical or logical principles of Des Cartes and Malebranche. According to the former, as we have seen, the finite presupposes the infinite, and, indeed, so far as it is real, it is identical with the infinite. The infinite is absolute reality, because it is pure affirmation, because it is that which *negationem nullam involvit*. The finite is distinguished from it simply by its limit, *i.e.*, by its wanting something which the infinite has. At this point Spinoza takes up the argument. If the infinite be the real, and

the finite, so far as it is distinguished therefrom, the unreal, then the supposed substantiality or individuality of finite beings is an illusion. In itself the finite is but an abstraction, to which imagination has given an apparent independence. All limitation or determination is negative, and in order to apprehend positive reality, we must abstract from limits. By denying the negative, we reach the affirmative; by annihilating finitude, and so undoing the illusory work of the imagination, we reach the indeterminate or unconditioned being which alone truly is. All division, distinction, and relation are but *entia rationis.* Imagination and abstraction can give to them, as they can give to mere negation and nothingness, "a local habitation and a name," but they have no objective meaning, and in the highest knowledge, in the *scientia intuitiva,* which deals only with reality, they must entirely disappear.

Hence to reach the truth as to matter, we must free ourselves from all such ideas as figure or number, measure or time, which imply the separation and relation of parts. Thus in his 50th letter, in answer to some question about figure, Spinoza says, "to prove that figure is

negation, and not anything positive, we need only consider that the whole of matter conceived indefinitely, or in its infinity, can have no figure; but that figure has a place only in finite or determinate bodies. He who says that he perceives figure, says only that he has before his mind a limited thing and the manner in which it is limited. But this limitation does not pertain to a thing in its 'esse,' but contrariwise in its 'non-esse' (*i.e.*, it signifies, not that some positive quality belongs to the thing, but that something is wanting to it). Since, then, figure is but limitation, and limitation is but negation, we cannot say that figure is anything." The same kind of reasoning is elsewhere (*Epist.* 29) applied to solve the difficulties connected with the divisibility of space or extension. Really, according to Spinoza, extension is indivisible, though modally it is divisible. In other words, parts *ad infinitum* may be taken in space by the abstracting mind, but these parts have no separate existence. You cannot rend space, or take one part of it out of its connection with other parts. Hence arises the impossibility of asserting *either* that there is an infinite

number of parts in space, *or* that there is not. The solution of the antinomy is that neither alternative is true. There are many things *quæ nullo numero explicari possunt*, and to understand these things we must abstract altogether from the idea of number. The contradiction arises entirely from the application of that idea to the infinite. We cannot say that space has a finite number of parts, for every finite space must be conceived as itself included in infinite space. Yet, on the other hand, an infinite number is an absurdity; it is a number which is not a number. We escape the difficulty only when we see that number is a category inapplicable to the infinite, and this to Spinoza means that it is not applicable to reality, that it is merely an abstraction, or *ens imaginationis*.

The same method which solves the difficulties connected with the nature of matter, is applied to mind. Here also we reach the reality, or thing in itself, by abstracting from all determination. All conceptions, therefore, that involve the independence of the finite, all conceptions of good, evil, freedom, and responsibility disappear. When Blyenbergh accuses Spinoza of making God

the author of evil, Spinoza answers that evil is an *ens rationis* that has no existence for God. "Evil is not something positive, but a state of privation, something that exists not in relation to the divine, but simply in relation to the human intelligence. It is a conception that arises from that generalizing tendency of our minds, which leads us to bring all beings that have the external form of man under one and the same definition, and to suppose that they are all equally capable of the highest perfection which we can deduce from such a definition. When, therefore, we find an individual whose works are not consistent with this perfection, straightway we judge that he is deprived of it, or that he is diverging from his own nature,—a judgment we should never make if we had not thus referred him to a general definition, and supposed him to be possessed of the nature it defines. But since God does not know things abstractly, or through such general definitions, and since there cannot be more reality in things than the divine intelligence and power bestows upon them, it manifestly follows that the defect which belongs to finite things, cannot be called a privation in relation to the intelli-

gence of God, but only in relation to the intelligence of man."[1] Thus evil and good vanish when we consider things *sub specie æternitatis*, because they are categories that imply a certain independence in finite beings. For the idea of a moral standard implies a relation of man to the absolute good, a relation of the finite to the infinite, in which the finite is not simply lost and absorbed in the infinite.

But Spinoza can admit no such relation. In the presence of the infinite the finite disappears, for it exists only by abstraction and negation: or it *seems* to us to exist, not because of what is present to our thoughts, but because of what is not present to them. As we think ourselves free, because we are conscious of our actions but not of their causes, so we think that we have an individual existence, because the infinite intelligence is not wholly but only partially realized in us. But as we cannot really divide space, though we can think of a part of it, so neither can we place any real division in the divine intelligence. In this way we can understand how Spinoza is able to speak of the

[1] *Epist.* 32.

human mind as part of the infinite thought of God, and of the human body as part of the infinite extension of God, while yet he asserts that the divine substance is simple, and not made up of parts. So far as they exist, they must be conceived as parts of the divine substance, but when we look directly at that divine substance, their separate existence altogether disappears.

It has, however, been already mentioned that this ascending movement of abstraction does not at once and directly bring Spinoza to the absolute unity of substance. The principle that "determination is negation," and that therefore the absolute reality is to be found only in the indeterminate, would lead us to expect this conclusion; but the Cartesian dualism prevents Spinoza from reaching it. Mind and matter are so absolutely opposed, that even when we take away all limit and determination from both, they still retain their distinctness. Raised to infinity, they still refuse to be identified. We are forced, indeed, to take from them their substantial or substantive existence, for there can be no other substance but God, who includes all reality in Himself. But though reduced to attributes of a

common substance, the difference of thought and extension is insoluble. The independence of individual finite things disappears whenever we substitute thought for imagination, but even to pure intelligence, extension remains extension, and thought remains thought.

Spinoza seems therefore reduced to a dilemma; he cannot surrender either the unity or the duality of things, yet he cannot relate them to each other. The only course left open to him is to conceive each attribute in its turn as the whole substance, and to regard their difference as the difference of expression. As the patriarch was called by the two names of Jacob and Israel, under different aspects, each of which included the whole reality of the man, so our minds apprehend the absolute substance in two ways, each of which expresses its whole nature.[1] In this way the extremes of absolute identity and absolute difference seem to be reconciled. There is a complete parallelism of thought and extension, *ordo et connexio idearum idem est ac ordo et connexio rerum*,[2] yet there is also a complete independence and absence of relation

[1] *Epist.* 27. [2] *Eth.* ii. 7.

between them, for each is the whole. A thing in one expression cannot be related to itself in another expression. Hence in so far as we look at the substance under the attribute of thought, we must take no account of extension, and in so far as we look at it under the attribute of extension, we must equally refuse to take any account of thought. This parallelism may be best illustrated by Spinoza's account of the relation of the human soul and body. The soul is the idea of the body, and the body is the object of the soul, whatever is in the one really is in the other ideally; yet this relation of object and subject does not imply any connection. The motions and changes of the body have to be accounted for partly by itself, partly by the influence of other bodies; and the thoughts of the soul in like manner have to be accounted for partly by what God thinks as constituting the individual mind, and partly by what He thinks as constituting the minds of other individuals. But to account for thought by the motions of the body, or for the motions of the body by thought, is to attempt to bridge the impassable gulf between thought and extension. It involves

the double absurdity of accounting for a thing by itself, and of accounting for it by that which has nothing in common with it.

In one point of view, this theory of Spinoza deserves the highest praise for that very characteristic which probably excited most odium against it at the time it was first published, namely, its exaltation of matter. It is the mark of an imperfect spiritualism to hide its eyes from outward nature, and to shrink from the material as impure and defiling. But its horror and fear are proofs of weakness; it flies from an enemy it cannot overcome. Spinoza's bold identification of spirit and matter, God and nature, contains in it the germ of a higher idealism than can be found in any philosophy that asserts the claims of the former at the expense of the latter. A system that begins by making nature godless, will inevitably end, as Schelling once said, in making God unnatural. The expedients by which Des Cartes keeps matter at a distance from God, were intended to maintain His pure spirituality; but their ultimate effect was seen in his reduction of the spiritual nature to mere will. As Christianity has its superiority over other religions in

this, that it does not end with the opposition of the human to the divine, the natural to the spiritual, but ultimately reconciles them, so a true idealism must vindicate its claims by absorbing materialism into itself. It was therefore a true instinct of philosophy that led Spinoza to raise matter to the co-equal of spirit, and at the same time to protest against the Cartesian conception of matter as mere inert mass, moved only by impulse from without. "What were a God that only impelled the world from without?" says Goethe. "It becomes Him to stir it by an inward energy, to involve nature in Himself, Himself in nature, so that that which lives and moves and has a being in Him can never feel the want of His power or His spirit."

While, however, Spinoza thus escapes some of the inconsequences of Des Cartes, the contradiction that was *implicit* in the Cartesian system between the duality and the unity, the attributes and the substance, in his system becomes *explicit*. When so much emphasis is laid upon the unity of substance, it becomes more difficult to explain the difference of the attributes. The result is, that Spinoza is forced to account for it, not by the

nature of substance itself, but by the nature of the intelligence to which it is revealed. "By substance," he says, "I understand that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself. By attribute I understand the same thing, *nisi quod attributum dicatur respectu intellectus substantiæ certum talem naturam tribuentis.*"[1] Hence we are naturally led with Erdmann to think of the intelligence dividing the substance as a kind of prism that breaks the white light into different colours, through each of which the same world is seen, only with a different aspect. But if the intelligence in itself is but a mode of one of the attributes, how can it be itself the source of their distinction?

The key to this difficulty is that Spinoza has really, and almost in spite of his logical principles, two opposite conceptions of substance, between which he alternates without ever bringing them to a unity. On the one hand, in accordance with the principle that determination is negation, substance must be taken as that which is utterly indeterminate, an Absolute Being, which we can characterise only by denying of it

[1] *Epist.* 27.

everything that we assert of the finite. In this view, no predicate can be applied univocally to God and to the creatures; He differs from them, not only in existence, but in essence.[1] If we follow out this view to its legitimate result, God is withdrawn into His own absolute unity, and no difference of attributes can be ascribed to Him, except in respect of something else than Himself. It is owing to the defects of our intelligence that He appears under different forms or expressions; in Himself He is pure Being, without form or expression at all. But, on the other hand, it is to be observed, that while Spinoza really proceeds by abstraction and negation, he does not *mean* to do so. The abstract is to him the unreal and imaginary, and what he means by substance is not simply Being in general,—the conception that remains when we omit all that distinguishes the particulars,—but the absolute totality of things, conceived as a unity in which all particular existence is included and subordinated. Hence at a single stroke the indeterminate passes into the most determinate Being, the Being with no attributes at all passes into the Being constituted by

[1] *Eth.* i. 17, Schol.

an infinite number of attributes. And while, under the former conception, the defect of our intelligence seemed to be that it divided the substance, or saw a difference of attributes in its absolute unity, under the second conception its defect lies in its apprehending only *two* out of the infinite multitude of these attributes.

To do justice to Spinoza, therefore, we must distinguish between the actual effect of his logic and its effect as he conceived it. The actual effect of his logic is to dissolve all things in the ultimate abstraction of Being, from which we can find no way back to the concrete. But his intent was simply to relate all the parts to that absolute unity which is the presupposition of all thought and being, and so to arrive at the most concrete and complete idea of the reality of things. He failed to see what is involved in his own principle that "determination is negation"; for if affirmation is impossible without negation, then the attempt to divorce the two from each other, the attempt to find a purely affirmative being, must necessarily end in confusing the barest of all abstractions with the unity of all things. But even when the infinite substance is defined as the negative of the

finite, the idea of the finite becomes an essential element in the conception of the infinite. Even the Pantheist, who says that God is what finite things are not, recognises in spite of himself that God has a relation to finite things. Finite things may in his eyes have no positive relation to God, yet they have a negative relation; it is through their evanescence and transitoriness, through their nothingness, that the eternal, the infinite reality alone is revealed to him.

Spinoza is quite conscious of this process, conscious that he reaches the affirmation of substance by a negation of what he conceives as the purely negative and unreal existence of finite things: but as he regards the assertion of the finite as merely an illusion due to *our* imagination, so he regards the correction of this illusion, the negation of the finite as a movement of reflection which belongs merely to *our* intelligence, and has nothing to do with the nature of substance in itself. We find the true affirmation by the negation of the negative, but in itself affirmation has no relation to negation. Hence his absolute being is the dead all-absorbing substance and not the self-revealing spirit. It is the being without determination, and not the being

that determines itself. There is no reason in the nature of substance why it should have either attributes or modes; neither individual finite things nor the general distinction of mind and matter can be deduced from it. The descending movement of thought is not what Spinoza himself said it should be, an evolution, but simply an external and empirical process by which the elements dropped in the ascending movement of abstraction are taken up again with a merely nominal modification. For the sole change in the conception of mind and matter in general and in the conception of individual minds and bodies, which results from their reference to the idea of God, is that they lose their substantive character and become adjectives. Aristotle objected to Plato that his ideas were merely *αἰσθητὰ ἀΐδια*, that is, that his idealisation of the world was merely superficial, and left the things idealised very much what they were before to the sensuous consciousness; and the same may be said of Spinoza's negation of finite things. It was an external and imperfect negation, which did not transform the idea of the finite, but merely substituted the names of attributes and modes for the names of general and individual substances.

The same defective logic, by which the movement of thought in determining the substance is regarded as altogether external to the substance itself, is seen again in Spinoza's conceptions of the relations of the attributes to each other. Adopting the Cartesian opposition of mind and matter, he does not see, any more than Des Cartes, that in their opposition they are correlative. Or if he did see it (as seems possible from a passage in his earliest treatise),[1] he regarded the correlation as merely subjective, merely belonging to our thought. They are to him only the two attributes which we happen to know, out of the infinite number belonging to God. There is no necessity that the substance should manifest itself in just these attributes and no others; for abstract substance is equally receptive of all determinations, and equally indifferent to them all. Just because the unity is merely generic, the differences are accidental, and do not form by their union any complete whole. If Spinoza had seen that matter in itself is the correlative opposite of mind in itself, he need not have sought by abstracting from the difference of these elements to reach a unity which is manifested in that very

[1] *Tractatus de Deo et homine*, ii. 19.

difference, and his absolute would have been not substance but spirit.

This idea he never reached, but we find him approximating to it in two ways. On the one hand, he condemns the Cartesian conception of matter as passive and self-external, or infinitely divisible—as, in short, the mere opposite of thought.[1] And sometimes he insists on the parallelism of extension and thought at the expense of their opposition in a way that almost anticipates the assertion by Leibniz of the essential identity of mind and matter. On the other hand, he recognises that this parallelism is not complete. Thought is not like a picture; it is conscious, and conscious not only of itself, but of extension. It transcends therefore the absolute distinction between itself and the other attributes. It is only because he cannot rid himself of the phantom of an extended matter, as a thing in itself which is entirely different from the idea of it, that Spinoza is prevented from recognising in mind that unity which transcends all distinctions, even its own distinction from matter. As it is, his main reason for saying that intelligence is not an attribute of God, but merely a

[1] *Epist.* 70.

mode, seems to be this, that the thought of God must be conceived as producing its own object, *i.e.*, as transcending the distinction of subject and object which is necessary to our intelligence.[1] But this argument of itself points to a concrete quite as much as to an abstract unity. It is as consistent with the idea of absolute spirit as with that of absolute substance. Spinoza's deliberate and formal doctrine is undoubtedly the latter; but he constantly employs expressions which imply the former, as when he speaks of God as *causa sui*. The higher idea inspires him, though his consciousness only embraces the lower idea.

The ethical philosophy of Spinoza is determined by the same principles and embarrassed by the same difficulties as his metaphysics. In it also we find the same imperfect conception of the relation of the positive to the negative elements, and, as a consequence, the same confusion of the highest unity of thought, the affirmation that subordinates and transcends all negation with mere abstract affirmation. Or, to put the same thing in ethical language, Spinoza teaches a morality which is in every point the opposite of asceticism,

[1] *Eth.* i. 17, Schol.

a morality of self-assertion or self-seeking, and not of self-denial. The *conatus sese conservandi* is to him the supreme principle of virtue;[1] yet this self-seeking is supposed, under the guidance of reason, to identify itself with the love of man and the love of God, and to find blessedness not in the reward of virtue, but in virtue itself. It is only confusion of thought and false mysticism that could object to this result on the ground of the element of self still preserved in the *amor Dei intellectualis*. For it is just the power of identifying himself with that which is wider and higher than his individual being that makes morality possible to man. But the difficulty lies in this, that Spinoza will not admit the negative element, the element of mortification or sacrifice, into morality at all, even as a moment of transition. For him there is no dead self, by which we may rise to higher things, no losing of life that we may find it. The negative is nothing; it is evil in the only sense in which evil exists, and cannot be the source of good. The higher affirmation of our own being, the higher seeking of ourselves which is identical with the love of God, must

[1] *Eth.* iv. 22, Schol.

therefore be regarded as nothing distinct in kind from that first seeking of our natural self which in Spinoza's view belongs to us in common with the animals, and indeed in common with all beings whatever. It must be regarded merely as a direct development and extension of the same thing. The main interest of the Spinozistic ethics therefore lies in observing by what steps he accomplishes this transition, while excluding altogether the idea of a real division of the higher and the lower life, the spirit and flesh, and of a conflict in which the former is developed through the sacrifice of the latter.

Finite creatures exist as modes of the divine substance, only so far as they partake in the infinite, or, what is the same thing with Spinoza, in the purely affirmative or self-affirming nature of God. They therefore must also be self-affirming. They can never limit themselves; their limit lies in this, that they are not identified with the infinite substance which expresses itself also in other modes. In other words, the limit of any finite creature, that which makes it finite, lies without it, and its own existence, so far as it goes, must be pure self-assertion and self-seeking. *Unaquæque*

res quantum in se est in suo esse perseverare conatur, and this *conatus* is its very essence or inmost nature.[1] In the animals this *conatus* takes the form of appetite, in man of desire, which is "appetite with the consciousness of it."[2] But this constitutes no essential difference between appetite and desire, for "whether a man be conscious of his appetite or no, the appetite remains one and the same thing."[3] Man therefore, like the animals, is purely self-asserting and self-seeking. He can neither know nor will anything but his own being, or if he knows or wills anything else, it must be something involved in his own being. If he knows other beings, or seeks their good, it must be because their existence and their good are involved in his own. If he loves and knows God, it must be because he cannot know himself without knowing God, or find his supreme good anywhere but in God.

What at first makes the language difficult to us is the identification of will and intelligence. Both are represented as affirming their objects. Des Cartes had prepared the way for this when

[1] *Eth.* iii. 6, 7. [2] *Eth.* iii. 9.
[3] *Eth.* iii. Affect. Def. 1.

he treated the will as the faculty of judging or giving assent to certain combinations of ideas, and distinguished it from the purely intellectual faculties by which the ideas are apprehended. By this distinction he had, as he supposed, secured a place for human freedom. Admitting that intelligence is under a law of necessity, he claimed for the will a certain latitude or liberty of indifference, a power of giving or withholding assent in all cases where the relations of ideas were not absolutely clear and distinct. Spinoza points out that there is no ground for such a distinction, that the acts of apprehension and judgment cannot be separated from each other. "In the mind there is no volition, *i.e.*, no affirmation or negation which is not immediately involved in the idea it apprehends," and therefore "intellect and will are one and the same thing."[1] If, then, there is no freedom except the liberty of indifference, freedom is impossible. Man, like all other beings and things, is under an absolute law of necessity. All the actions of his will, as well as of his intelligence, are but different forms of the self-assertive tendency to which he cannot but yield, because it is one with

[1] *Eth.* ii. 49.

his very being, or only ideally distinguishable therefrom.

There is, however, another idea of liberty. Liberty as the opposite of necessity is an absurdity —it is impossible for either God or man; but liberty as the opposite of slavery is possible, and it is actually possessed by God. The divine liberty consists in this, that God acts from the necessity of His own nature alone, and is not in any way determined from without. And the great question of ethics is, How far can man partake in this liberty? At first it would seem impossible that he should partake in it. He is a finite being, whose power is infinitely surpassed by the power of other beings to which he is related. His body acts only as it is acted on, and his mind cannot therefore apprehend his body, except as affected by other things. His self-assertion and self-seeking are therefore confused with the asserting and seeking of other things, and are never pure. His thought and activity cannot be understood except through the influence of other things which lie outside of his consciousness, and upon which his will has no influence. He cannot know clearly and distinctly either himself or anything else; how then

can he know his own good or determine himself by the idea of it?

The answer is the answer of Des Cartes, that the apprehension of any finite thing involves the adequate idea of the infinite and eternal nature of God.[1] This is the primary object of intelligence, in which alone is grounded the possibility of knowing either ourselves or anything else. In so far as our knowledge is determined by this idea, or by the ideas of other things, which are referred to this idea and seen in its light, in so far its action flows from an internal and not an external necessity. In so far, on the other hand, as we are determined by the affections of the body, *i.e.*, by ideas in which the nature of our own body and the nature of other things are confused together, in so far we are determined by an external necessity. Or, to put the same thing in what has been shown to be merely another way of expression, in so far as we are determined by pure intelligence we are free, but in so far as we are determined by opinion and imagination we are slaves.

From these premises it is easy to see what form the opposition of reason and passion must necessarily take with Spinoza. The passions belong to

[1] *Eth.* ii. 45.

our nature as finite; they are grounded on, or rather are but another form of inadequate ideas; but we are free only in so far as our ideas either immediately are, or can be made, adequate. Our idea of God is adequate *ex vi termini;* our ideas of the affections of our body are inadequate, but can be made adequate in so far as they are referred to the idea of God. And as the idea of God is purely affirmative, this reference to the idea of God implies the elimination of the negative element from the ideas of the affections of the body, "for nothing that is positive in a false idea is removed by the presence of truth as such."[1] Brought into contact with the idea of God, all ideas become true and adequate, by the removal of the negative or false element in them. The idea of God is, as it were, the touchstone which distinguishes the gold from the dross. It enables us to detect the higher spiritual element in the natural passions, and to sever the element belonging to that pure love of self, which is identical with the love of perfection, from the elements belonging to that impure love of our own finite individuality as such, which is identical with the love of evil.

[1] *Eth.* iv. 1.

The imperfection in Spinoza's development of this principle has already been indicated. It is in fact the same imperfection which runs through his whole system. Just as he supposed that the ideas of finite things were at once made consistent with the idea of the infinite when he had named them modes, so here his conception of the change through which selfish natural desire must pass in order to become spiritual, is far too superficial and external. Hence he has no sympathy with asceticism, but treats it, like Bentham, as a *torva et tristis superstitio.* Joy is the "transition from less to greater perfection," and cannot be but good; pain is the "transition from greater to less perfection," and cannot be but evil. The revolt against the mediæval opposition of nature and spirit is visible in many of his sayings. "No Deity who is not envious can delight in my weakness or hurts, or can regard as virtues those fears and sighs and tears which are the signs of the mind's weakness; but contrariwise, the greater is our joy, the greater is our progress to perfection, and our participation in the divine nature."[1] "A free man thinks of nothing so little as of death, his wisdom

[1] *Eth.* iv. 45, Schol.

is a meditation not of death but of life."[1] The same idea, combining with the idea of necessity, leads him to condemn repentance and pity, as well as pride and humility. Unconsciously, Spinoza reproduces the principle of asceticism, while in words he utterly rejects it. For though he tells us that pure self-complacency is the highest thing we can hope, yet from this self-complacency all regard to the finite individuality of the subject is eliminated. *Qui Deum amat, conari non potest ut Deus ipsum contra amet.* In like manner, he absolutely condemns all hatred, envy, rivalry, and ambition, as springing out of an over-estimate of those finite things which only one can possess, while the highest good is that which is enjoyed the more easily and fully the greater the number of participants. Yet Spinoza's exaltation of the social life, and of the love that binds it together, is too like the Buddhist's universal charity that embraces all creatures, and all creatures equally. Both are based on an abstraction from all that is individual, only the Buddhist's abstraction goes a step further, and erases even the distinction between man and the animals. Spinoza felt the

[1] *Eth.* iv. 67.

pressure of this all-levelling logic when he said, "I confess I cannot understand how spirits express God more than the other creatures, for I know that between the finite and the infinite there is no proportion, and that the distinction between God and the most excellent of created things differs not a whit from the distinction between him and the lowest and meanest of them."[1] As Pope said, God is "as full, as perfect in a hair as heart": in all finite things there is a ray of divinity, and in nothing more than a ray. Yet in another epistle, Spinoza contradicts this view, and declares that, while he does not consider it necessary to "know Christ after the flesh, he does think it is necessary to know the eternal Son of God, *i.e.*, God's eternal wisdom, which is manifested in all things, but chiefly in the mind of man, and most of all in Christ Jesus."[2] In the *Ethics* Spinoza treats the distinction of man and the animals as an absolute distinction, and, forgetful of the parallelism of the attributes, he asserts that the human soul cannot all be destroyed along with the body, for that there is something of it which is eternal. Yet from this eternity we must of course

[1] *Epist.* 57. [2] *Epist.* 21.

eliminate all notion of the consciousness of the finite self as such.

At this point, therefore, the two opposite streams of Spinoza's thought, the positive method he *intends* to pursue, and the negative or abstracting method he really *does* pursue, meet in irreconcilable contradiction. The finite must be related to the infinite so as to preserve all that is in it of reality; and therefore we must abstract from its limit, *i.e.*, from the negative element in it. But it turns out that with this abstraction the positive also disappears, and God becomes all in all in a sense that absolutely excludes the existence of the finite. "The mind's intellectual love of God," says Spinoza, "is the very love wherewith God loves Himself, not in so far as He is infinite, but in so far as He can be expressed by the essence of the human mind, considered under the form of eternity; *i.e.*, the mind's intellectual love of God is part of the infinite love wherewith God loves Himself."[1] This double "in so far," which returns so frequently in Spinoza, just conceals for a moment the contradiction of two streams of thought, one of which must be swallowed up by the other, if they are once allowed to meet.

[1] *Eth.* v. 36.

We have now reviewed the main points of the system, which was the ultimate result of the principles of Des Cartes. The importance of this first movement of modern philosophy lies in its assertion and exhibition of the unity of the intelligible world with itself and with the mind of man. In this point of view, it was the philosophical counterpart of Protestantism; but, like Protestantism in its earliest phase, it passed rapidly from the doctrine that, without the mediation of priest or authority, God can reveal Himself to the spirit of man, to the doctrine that man's spirit is as nothing before God. The divine object seemed too powerful for the subject, who effaced himself before God that he might be strong towards men. But in this natural movement of feeling and thought it was forgotten that a God that effaces the world and the finite spirit by His presence cannot be a living God. Spinoza gives the ultimate expression to this tendency, and at the same time marks its limit, when he says that whatever reality is in the finite is of the infinite. But he is unsuccessful in showing that, on the principles on which he starts, there can be any reality in the finite at

all. Yet even if the finite be an illusion, still more if it be better than an illusion, it requires to be accounted for. Spinoza accounts for it neither as illusory nor as real. It was reserved for the following generation of philosophers to assert, in different ways, the reality of the finite, the value of experience, and the futility of abstractions. Spinoza had declared that true knowledge consists in seeing things under the form of eternity; but it is impossible that things can be seen under the form of eternity, unless they have been first seen under the form of time. The one-sided assertion of individuality and difference in the schools of Locke and Leibniz, was the natural complement of the one-sided assertion of universality and unity in the Cartesian school. But when the individualistic tendency of the eighteenth century had exhausted itself, and produced its own refutation in the works of Kant, it was inevitable that the minds of men should again turn to the great philosopher, who, with almost perfect insight working through imperfect logic, first formulated the idea of a unity pre-supposed in and transcending the difference of matter and mind, subject and object.

METAPHYSIC.

THE term metaphysic, originally intended to mark the place of a particular treatise in the collection of Aristotle's works, has, mainly owing to a misunderstanding, survived several other titles, such as "First Philosophy," "Ontology," and "Theology," which Aristotle himself used or suggested. Neo-Platonic mystics interpreted it as signifying that which is not merely "after" but "beyond" physics, and found in it a fit designation for a science which, as they held, could not be attained except by one who had turned his back upon the natural world. And writers of a different tendency in a later time gladly accepted it as a convenient nickname for theories which they regarded as having no basis in experience, in the same spirit in which the great German minister Stein used the analogous title of "metapolitics" for airy and unpractical

schemes of social reform. A brief indication of the contents of Aristotle's treatise may enable us to give a general definition of the science which was first distinctly constituted by it, and to determine in what sense the subjects which that science has to consider are beyond nature and experience.

For Aristotle, metaphysic is the science which has to do with Being as such, Being in general, as distinguished from the special sciences which deal with special forms of Being. There are certain questions which, in Aristotle's view, we have a right to ask in regard to everything that presents itself as real. We may ask what is its ideal nature or definition, and what are the conditions of its realisation; we may ask by what or whom it was produced, and for what end; we may ask, in other words, for the formal and the material, for the efficient and the final causes of everything that is. These different questions point to different elements in our notion of Being, elements which may be considered in their general relations apart from any particular case of their union. These, therefore, the first philosophy must investigate.

But, further, this science of being cannot be entirely separated from the science of knowing, but must determine at least its most general principles. For the science that deals with what is most universal in being is, for that very reason, dealing with the objects which are most nearly akin to the intelligence. These, indeed, are not the objects which are first presented to our minds; we begin with the particular, not the universal, with a *πρῶτον ἡμῖν* which is not *πρῶτον φύσει*; but science reaches its true form only when the order of thought is made one with the order of nature, and the particular is known through the universal. Yet this conversion or revolution of the intellectual point of view is not to be regarded as an absolute change from error to truth; for Aristotle holds that *nihil est in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*, in the meaning that in sense perception there is already the working of that discriminative intelligence [1] which, beginning in sense perception, with the distinction of particular from particular, can rest only when it has apprehended things in their universal forms or definitions. Looking at know-

[1] *Δύναμις κριτική, Anal. Post.* ii. 99*b*.

ledge *formally*, the highest law of thought, the law of contradiction (or, as we might call it, to indicate Aristotle's meaning more exactly, the law of definition or distinction), is already implied in the first act of perception by which one thing is distinguished from another. Looking at it *materially*, the reason of man is to be conceived as potentially all that is knowable; *i.e.*, objects are so related to it that for it to know them in their essential definitions is only to know itself. The aim of science, in this view, is to break through the husk of matter, and to apprehend things in their forms, in which they are one with the mind that knows them. Hence also it follows that in rising to the most universal science, the science of being in general, the mind is not leaving the region of immediate experience, in which it is at home, for a far-off region of abstractions. Rather it is returning to itself, apprehending that which is most closely related to itself, and which therefore, though it is late in being made the direct object of investigation, is yet presupposed in all that is, and is known.[1]

[1] What is said here as to the intelligence is partly taken from the *De Anima*. The necessary qualifications of the

Metaphysic, then, is the science which deals with the principles which are presupposed in all being and knowing, though they are brought to light only by philosophy. One more trait completes the Aristotelian account of it. It is theology, or the science of God. Now God is *νόησις νοήσεως*, pure self-consciousness, the absolute thought which is one with its object, and He is therefore the first cause of all existence. For, while the world of nature is a world of motion and change, in which form is realised in matter, this process of the finite can be explained only by referring it back to an unmoved mover, in whom there is no distinction of matter and form, and who is, therefore, in Aristotle's view, to be conceived as pure form, the purely ideal or theoretic activity of a consciousness whose object is itself. Such a conception, however, while it secures the independence and absoluteness of the unmoved mover, by detaching from him all relation to what is other than himself, seems to make his connection with the world inexplicable. We can on this theory refer the world to God, but

above general statement of Aristotle's views will be given subsequently.

not God to the world. Hence Aristotle seems sometimes to say that God is the first mover only as He is the last end after which all creation strives, and this leads him to attribute to nature a desire or will which is directed towards the good as its object or end.

Aristotle then brings together in his metaphysic three elements which are often separated from each other, and the connection of which is far from being at once obvious. It is to him the science of the first principles of being. It is also the science of the first principles of knowing. Lastly, it is the science of God, as the beginning and end of all things, the absolute unity of being and thought, in which all the differences of finite thought and existence are either excluded or overcome.

To some this description of the contents of Aristotle's treatise, and especially the last part of it, may seem to be a confirmation of all the worst charges brought against metaphysic. For at both extremes this supposed science seems to deal with that which is beyond experience, and which therefore cannot be verified by it. It takes us back to a beginning, which is prior to the

existence as well as to the consciousness of finite objects in time and space, and on to an end, to which no scientific prophecy based upon our consciousness of such objects can reach. In the former aspect of it, it has to do with notions so abstract and general that it seems as if they could not be fixed or tested by reference to any experience, but must necessarily be the playthings of dialectical sophistry. In the latter aspect of it, it entangles us in questions as to the final cause and ultimate meaning of things, questions involving so comprehensive a view of the infinite universe in which we are insignificant parts that it seems as if any attempt to answer them must be for us vain and presumptuous. On both sides, therefore, metaphysic appears to be an attempt to occupy regions which are beyond the habitable space of the intelligible world—to deal with ideas which are either so vague and abstract that they cannot be fastened to any definite meaning, or so complex and far-reaching that they can never by any possibility be verified. For beings like men, fixed within these narrow limits of space and time, the true course, it would seem, is to "cultivate their gardens," asking neither

whence they come nor whither they go, or asking it only within the possible limits of history and scientific prophecy. To go back to the beginning or forward to the end, even in a temporal, still more in a metaphysical sense, is beyond our power. That which is *πρῶτον φύσει* escapes us even more absolutely than the prehistorical and pregeological records of man and his world. That which is *ὕστατον φύσει* escapes us even more absolutely than the far-off future type of civilisation, which social science vainly endeavours to anticipate. Our state is best pictured by that early Anglican philosopher who compared it to a bird flying through a lighted room "between the night and the night." The true aim of philosophy is, therefore, it would seem, to direct our thoughts to the careful examination and utilisation of the narrow space allotted to us by an inscrutable power, and with scientific self-restraint to refrain from all speculation either on first or on final causes.

The main questions as to the possibility and the nature of metaphysic, according to Aristotle's conception of it, may be summed up under two heads. We may ask whether we can in any sense reach that which is beyond experience, and, if so, whether

this "beyond" is a first or a last principle, a precondition or a final cause of nature and experience, or both. The former question branches out into two subordinate questions, according as we look at metaphysic from the objective or the subjective side, or, to express the matter more accurately, according as we consider it in relation to those natural objects which are *merely* objects of knowledge, or in relation to those spiritual objects which are also subjects of knowledge. We shall, therefore, consider metaphysic, *first*, in relation to science in general, and, *secondly*, in relation to the special science of psychology. The latter question has also two aspects; for, while the idea of a first cause or principle points to the connection between metaphysic and logic, the idea of a last principle or final cause connects metaphysic with theology. We shall therefore consider in the *third* place the relation of metaphysic to logic, and in the *fourth* place its relation to religion and the philosophy of religion.

1. *Relation of Metaphysic to Science.* — The beginnings of science and metaphysic are identical, though there is a sense in which it may be admitted that the metaphysical comes before the

scientific or positive era. The first efforts of philosophy grasp at once at the prize of absolute knowledge. No sooner did the Greeks become dissatisfied with the pictorial synthesis of mythology, by which their thoughts were first lifted above the confusion of particular things, than they asked for one universal principle which should explain all things. The Ionic school sought to find some one phenomenon of nature which might be used as the key to all other phenomena. The Eleatics, seeing the futility of making one finite thing the explanation of all other finite things, tried to find that explanation in the very notion of Unity or Being itself. We need not underestimate the speculative value of such bold attempts to sum up all the variety of the world in one idea, but it is obvious that they rather give a name to the problem than solve it, or in other words, that they put the very consciousness of the problem in place of the solution of it. Science is possible only if we can rise from the particular to the universal, from a subjective view of things, as they immediately present themselves to us in perception, to an objective determination of them through laws and principles which have no special

relation to any particular set of events or to any one individual subject. But this is only one aspect of the matter. To advance from a conception of the world *in ordine ad individuum* to one *in ordine ad universum*, and so to discount and eliminate what is merely subjective and accidental in our first consciousness of the world, is the beginning of knowledge. But little is gained unless the universal, which we reach through the negation of the particulars, is more than their mere negation; unless it is a law or principle by means of which we can explain the particulars. Now the defect of early philosophy was that its universal was "the one beyond the many," not the "one in the many,"—in other words, that it was not a law or principle by which the particulars subsumed under it could be explained, but simply the abstraction of an element common to them. But the process of knowledge is a process that involves both analysis and synthesis, both negation and reaffirmation of the particulars with which we start. If we exaggerate the former aspect of it, we enter upon the *via negativa* of the mystics, the way of pure abstraction and negation, which would open the mind

to the ideal reality of things simply by shutting it to all the perceptions of sensible phenomena. And, if we follow out this method to its legitimate result, we must treat the highest abstraction, the abstraction of Being, as if it were the sum of all reality; and the Neo-Platonic ecstasy in which all distinction, even the distinction of subject and object, is lost as the only attitude of mind in which truth can be apprehended.

In the philosophy of the Socratic school we find the first attempt at a *systematic* as opposed to an *abstract* theory—the first attempt to bring together the one and the many, and so to determine the former that it should throw light upon the latter. Yet even in Plato the tendency to oppose the universal to the particular is stronger than the tendency to relate them to each other, and in some of his dialogues, as, *e.g.*, in the *Phædo*, we find a near approach to that identification of the process of knowledge with abstraction which is the characteristic of mysticism. Aristotle, therefore, had some ground for taking the Platonic principle that "the real is the universal" in a sense which excludes the reality of the individual. Yet, though he detected Plato's error in opposing the universal

to the particular, and though, at the same time, he did not entirely lose sight of the truth which Plato had exaggerated, that the particular is intelligible only *through* the universal, Aristotle was not able to escape the influence of that dualism which had marred the philosophy of his predecessor.[1] Hence the effect of his protest against a philosophy of abstraction was partly neutralised by his separation between the divine Being as pure form, and nature as the unity of form and matter, and again by his separation of the pure reason which apprehends the forms of things from the perceptions of sense which deal with forms realised in matter. And after Aristotle's time the tendency of philosophy was more and more to withdraw from contact with experience. The Neo-Platonic philosophy, and the Christian theology which was so strongly influenced by it, contained, indeed, an idea of the reconciliation of God and nature, and hence of form and matter, which must ultimately be fatal to dualism, and therefore to the method of mere abstraction. But the explicit meaning of the philosophy of the Middle Ages was still dualistic, and the mode in which the

[1] Cf. Green's Essay on Aristotle, *Works*, Vol. iii.

Aristotelian formulæ were wrought into the substance of Christian doctrine by the Scholastics, tended more and more to conceal that idea of the unity of opposites which was involved in Christianity. Hence mediæval Realism presented, in its most one-sided form, the doctrine that "the real is the universal," meaning by the universal nothing more than the abstract. And, as a natural consequence, the modern insurrection of the scientific spirit against scholasticism took its start from an equally bald and one-sided assertion of the opposite principle, that "the real is the individual," meaning by that the individual of immediate perception. If Platonism had dwelt too exclusively on one aspect of the process of knowledge, viz., that it seeks to rise above the particular, the sensible, the subjective, to the universal, the intelligible, the objective, as if in the latter alone were reality to be found, modern men of science learnt from their first nominalistic teachers to regard the universal as nothing more than an abbreviated expression for the particulars, and science itself as a mere generalisation of the facts of sensible perception. But this view of scientific knowledge, as a mere reaffirmation of

what is immediately given in sense, is as imperfect as the opposite theory, which reduces it to the mere negation of what is so given. An ideal world utterly and entirely divorced from the phenomenal, and an ideal world which is simply a repetition of the phenomenal, are equally meaningless. The processes of science have both a negative and a positive side; they involve a negation of the particular as it is immediately presented in sense, but only with a view to its being reaffirmed with a new determination through the universal. The fact, as it is first presented to us, is not the fact as it is; for, though it is from the fact as given that we rise to the knowledge of the law, it is the law that first enables us to understand what the fact really means. Our first consciousness of things is thus, not an immovable foundation upon which science may build, but rather a hypothetical and self-contradictory starting-point of investigation, which becomes changed and transformed as we advance.

The Nominalism of scientific men in modern times is due to two special causes, one of which has already been mentioned. It is partly due to the traditions of a time when mediæval Realism

was the great enemy of science. The Baconian protest against the "anticipation of nature" was a relative truth, when it was urged against a class of writers who supposed that true theories could be attained without regard to facts; the Baconian assertion of the necessity of attending to *axiomata media* was the necessary correction of the tendencies of mystics, who supposed that philosophy could attain its end by grasping at once at absolute unity, and contented themselves therefore with a unity which did nothing to explain the differences. But, when the former was turned into the dogmatic assertion that the mind is, or ought to be, passive in the process of knowledge, as having in itself no principle for the explanation of things, and when the latter was turned into the dogmatic assertion that science can only proceed from part to part and never from the whole to the parts, these relative truths became a source of error. And this error was confirmed and increased by the mistaken views of those who first tried to correct it. For these, admitting that scientific truth is entirely derived from external experience, only ventured to assert the existence of *a priori* knowledge alongside of, and in addition

to, that which is *a posteriori*. In other words, they sought in inner experience a basis for those beliefs which outward experience seemed unable to support. But this basis was soon found to be treacherous. Introspection, observation of the inner life, as opposed to and distinguished from the outer life, could be only an observation of the facts of the individual consciousness as such; and to base religion and morality on such a foundation was to treat God and right as subjective phenomena, which do not necessarily correspond to any objective reality. Nor was this conclusion really evaded by the assertion of the self-evidencing necessity of such ideas and beliefs, or of the principles upon which they are founded. For this necessity, as a subjective phenomenon, might be accounted for otherwise than by the supposition of their objective validity. Such scepticism, was favoured by the progress of science, which, as it advanced from physics to biology and sociology, became more and more inconsistent with the idea of an absolute breach between inner and outer experience, and narrowed the sphere which had hitherto been reserved for the former. Man, it was urged, is but a part in

a greater whole, not exempted from the law of action and reaction which connects all parts of that whole with each other. His individual life contains only a few links in a chain of causation that goes back to a beginning and onward to an end of which he knows nothing. And, as Spinoza says, *vis qua homo in existendo perseverat, limitata est et a causis externis infinite superatur*.[1] Hence to treat ideas which are only states of the individual consciousness as the explanation of the world, instead of treating them as phenomena to be explained by its relation to that world, seemed to be an absurdity. The particular beliefs and tendencies of the mind were to be regarded, not as ultimate facts in reference to which everything is to be interpreted, but rather as facts which must themselves be referred to more general causes and laws. It thus appeared that the attempt to divide truth into an *a posteriori* and an *a priori* part, the latter of which should find its evidence in an inner experience as the former in an outer experience, is an illusive process. If the *a priori* is reduced to the level of the *a posteriori*, it becomes impossible to base on the *a*

[1] *Eth.* iv. 3.

priori any beliefs that go beyond the range of subjective experience. If the self and the not-self are taken simply as different finite things, which we can observe in turn, their relations must be brought under the general laws of the connection of finite things with each other; and the phenomena of mind must be treated, like the phenomena of matter, as facts to be accounted for according to these laws.

But this of itself indicates a way of escape both from the introspective theory and from the empiricism to which it is opposed. For it suggests the question—What is the source of those very laws which guide the procedure of science in accounting for facts, psychological facts among others? When a scientific psychologist of the modern school attempts to show how, by habituation of the individual and the race, the necessity of thought expressed in the law of causation has been produced in the minds of the present generation of men, it is obvious that his whole investigation and argument presuppose the law whose genesis he is accounting for. A glaring instance of such circular reasoning is found in the writings of the most prominent representative of the school in

the present day. Mr. Spencer begins by laying down as a first postulate of science that necessity of thought must be taken as a criterion of truth. It is by the continual aid of this postulate that he constructs his system of nature, and finally his psychological theory of the development of consciousness in man. Yet the main object of this psychological theory seems to be to account for the very necessities with which the author starts. Obviously such a philosophy contains elements of which the author is imperfectly conscious; for it involves that mind is not only the last product but the first presupposition of nature, or, in other words, that in mind nature returns upon its first principle. But to admit this is at once to lift the conscious being as such above the position which he would hold as merely a finite part of a finite world. It is to assert that nature has an essential relation to a consciousness which is developed in man, and that in the growth of this consciousness we have, not an evolution which is the result of the action of nature as a system of external causes *upon him*, but an evolution in which nature is really "coming to itself," *i.e.*, coming to self-consciousness, *in him*.

Now it was Kant who first—though with a certain limitation of aim—brought this idea of the relativity of thought and being to the consciousness of the modern world. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, thought, indeed, is not set up as an absolute *prius*, in relation to which all existence must be conceived, but it is set up as the *prius* of experience, and so of all existences which are objects of our knowledge. Experience is for Kant essentially relative to the unity of the self; it exists through the necessary subsumption of the forms and matter of sense under the categories, as, on the other hand, the consciousness of self is recognised as essentially dependent on this process. On this view, the *a priori* and *a posteriori* factors of experience do not really exist apart as two separate portions of knowledge. If they are severed, each loses all its meaning. Perceptions in themselves are void; categories in themselves are empty. We do not look outwards for one kind of truth and inwards for another, nor do we even, by an external process, bring facts given as a contingent under principles recognised as necessary; but the *a priori* is the condition under which alone the *a posteriori* exists

for us. Even if it is allowed that the facts of inner and outer experience contain a contingent element or matter, given under the conditions of time and space, yet neither time nor space nor the facts of experience conditioned by them exist for us, except as elements of an experience which is organised according to the categories.

This is the essential truth which Kant had to express. It is marred in his statement of it by the persistent influence of the abstract division between contingent matter given from without and necessary principles supplied from within, a division essentially inconsistent with the attempt to show that the contingent matter is necessarily subsumed under these principles, and indeed exists for us only as it is so subsumed. But Kant himself puts into our hands the means of correcting his own inadequacy, when he reduces the inaccessible "thing in itself," (which he at first speaks of as affecting our sensibility and so giving rise to the contingent matter of experience,) to a noumenon (*νοούμενον*) which is projected by reason itself. The *Dialectic* exhibits the idea of thought as not only constituting finite experience but also reaching beyond it, though as yet only

in a negative way. The mind is, on this view, so far unlimited that it knows its own limits; it is conscious of the defects of its experience, of the contingency of its sensible matter, and the emptiness and finitude of its categories; and, by reason of this consciousness, it is always seeking in experience an ideal which it is impossible to realise there. Thought measures experience by its own nature, and finds experience wanting. It demands a kind of unity or identity in its objects which it is unable to find in the actual objects presented to it. It is this demand of reason which lifts man above a mere animal existence, and forces him by aid of the categories to determine the matter of sense as a world of objects; yet, as this finite world of experience can never satisfy the demand of reason, the consciousness of it is immediately combined with the consciousness of its limited and phenomenal character. The student of the *Critique of Pure Reason* cannot but recognise the strange balance between the real and the phenomenal in which it ends, allowing to man the consciousness of each so far as to enable him to see the defects of the other,—so that by aid of the pure identity of reason he can criticise

and condemn the "blindness" or unresolved difference of experience, and by means of the concreteness and complexity of experience he can condemn the "empty" identity of reason.

In order, however, to understand the full bearing of Kant's criticism of knowledge, and at the same time to find the meeting-point of the opposite currents of thought which alternately prevail in it, it will be necessary to consider the subject a little more closely. The lesson of the *Critique* may be gathered up into two points. In the first place, it is a refutation of the ordinary view of experience, as something immediately given for thought and not constituted by it. In the second place, it is a demonstration of the merely phenomenal character of the objects of experience, *i.e.*, the demonstration that the objects of experience, even as determined by science, are not things in themselves. Both these results require to be kept clearly in view, if we would understand the movement of thought excited by Kant. On the one hand, Kant had to teach that what is ordinarily regarded as real, the world of experience, is transcendentally ideal, *i.e.*, is determined as real by *a priori* forms of thought. On the other hand,

he had to teach that the world so determined is empirically and not transcendentally real, *i.e.*, its reality is merely phenomenal. With the former lesson he met the man of science, and compelled him to renounce his materialistic explanation of the world, as a thing which exists in independence of the mind that knows it. The world we know is a world which exists only as it exists *for us*, for the thinking subject; hence the thinking subject, the ego, cannot be taken as an object like other objects, an object the phenomena of which are to be explained like other phenomena by their place in the connexion of experience. Having, however, thus repelled scientific materialism by the proof that the reality of experience is ideal, Kant refuses to proceed to the complete identification of reality with ideality, and meets the claims of the metaphysician with the assertion that the reality of experience is merely phenomenal. Hence he rejects any idealism that would involve the negation of things in themselves beyond phenomena, or the identification of the objects of experience with these things. The reality we know is a reality which exists only for us as conscious subjects, but this, though it

is the only reality we can know, is not the absolute reality.

It is, however, to be observed that the nature of this opposition, between phenomena and things in themselves, seems to change as we advance from the *Analytic*, where the existence of such things is presupposed, to the *Dialectic*, where the grounds of that presupposition are examined. At first the opposition seems to be between what is present in consciousness and what is absolutely beyond consciousness. The matter of experience is regarded as given externally in the affections of the sensible subject,—affections caused by an unknown thing in itself, of which, however, they can tell us nothing. On the other hand, the form of experience, the categories and principles of judgment which turn these affections into objects of knowledge, are not pure expressions of the real nature, the pure identity, of the subject in itself, but only products of the identity of the self in relation to the sensibility and its forms of time and space. Hence, on both sides we must regard experience as merely phenomenal, alike in relation to the noumenal object and in relation to the noumenal subject, which lurk be-

hind the veil and send forth into experience, on the one side, affections which become objects through their determination by the unity of thought, and, on the other side, an identity of thought which becomes self-conscious in relation to the objects so determined by itself.

Kant, however, having thus answered the question of the possibility of experience by reference to two things in themselves which are out of experience, is obliged to ask himself how the *consciousness* of these two things in themselves, and the criticism of experience in relation to them, is possible. And here, obviously, the opposition can no longer be conceived as an opposition between that which is and that which is not *in* consciousness. For the things in themselves must be present to consciousness in some fashion, in order that they may be contrasted with the phenomena. If, therefore, phenomena are now regarded as unreal, it must be because we have an *idea of reality* to which the reality of experience does not fully correspond. In the *Analytic* Kant had been speaking as if the real consisted in something which is not present to the conscious subject at all, though we, by analysis of

his experience, can refer to it as the cause of that which is so present. Now, in the *Dialectic*, he has to account for the fact that the conscious subject himself is able to transcend his experience, and to contrast the objects of it as phenomenal with things in themselves.

Now it is obvious that such an opposition is possible only so far as the thought, which constitutes experience, is at the same time conscious of itself in opposition to the experience it constitutes. The reason why experience is condemned as phenomenal is, therefore, not because it is that which exists for thought as opposed to that which does not exist for thought, but because it imperfectly corresponds to the determination of thought in itself. In other words, it is condemned as unreal, not because it is ideal, but because it is *imperfectly* ideal.[1] And the absolute reality is represented, not as that which exists without relation to thought, but as that which is identical with the thought for which it is. In the *Dialectic*, therefore, the noumenon is substituted for the thing in itself, and the noumenon is, as Kant tells us, the object as it exists for an intuitive

[1] Cf. *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, ii. p. 150 *seq.*

or perceptive understanding, *i.e.*, an understanding which does not synthetically combine the given matter of sense into objects by means of categories, but whose thought is one with the existence of the objects it knows. It is the idea of such a pure identity of knowing and being, as suggested by thought itself, which leads us to regard our actual empirical knowledge as imperfect, and its objects as not, in an absolute sense, *real* objects. The noumena are not, therefore, the unknown causes by whose action and reaction conscious experience is produced; they represent a unity of thought with itself to which it finds experience inadequate.

Now this higher unity of thought with itself is what Kant calls reason, and he identifies it with the faculty of syllogising. Hence the three forms of syllogism seem to him to point to three forms, in which the pure unity of reason presents itself to us in opposition to the merely *synthetic* unity of experience, a psychological, a cosmological, and a theological form. In each of these cases the empirical process of knowledge is accompanied, guided, and stimulated by an idea which nevertheless it is unable to realise or verify. In psychology, our in-

vestigations are prompted and regulated by an idea of the identity of the self, which is never realised in our actual self-consciousness, because the self of which we are conscious is manifold in its states, and because it stands in relation to an external world. The idea of simple identity is, therefore, something we may set before us as the goal of an ideal psychology, to which we may approximate, in so far as we can trace unity of faculty through all the differences of mental phenomena, but to which we can never attain, owing to the nature of the matter with which we deal. Again, in our scientific attempts to explain our external experience, the unity of reason takes the form of an idea of the world as a completed infinite whole, which contains all the objects known to us and all other possible objects ; but this idea cannot be realised in an experience which is conditioned by space and time, and is, therefore, ever incomplete. The idea of totality is, therefore, an *ideal*, which guides and stimulates our scientific progress, without which such a thing as science could not exist, but which at the same time can never be realised by science. Lastly, the unity of reason takes a third form in which identity and totality

are combined,—as the idea of a unity in which all differences, even the difference of subject and object, are transcended,—the idea of a unity of all things with each other and with the mind that knows them. This idea also is one which science can neither surrender nor realise. It cannot surrender it, without giving up that striving after unity without which science would not exist; and it cannot realise it, for the difference between the world, as it is presented to us in actual experience, and the subjective determination of our thinking consciousness, cannot be overcome. We can, indeed, use the idea that the world is an organic whole, determined in relation to an end which consciousness sets for itself, as an *heuristic* principle to guide us in following the connection of things with each other; but, as we cannot, by means of any such idea, anticipate what the facts of external experience will be, so we cannot prove that, for a mind other than ours, the unity of things which we represent in this way might not take a quite different aspect. Indeed we have reason to think it would; for, while we always think of a designing mind as using materials which have an existence and

nature independent of the purposes to which they are put, the absolute mind must be conceived as creating the materials themselves, by the same act whereby they are determined to an end. We must conceive it, in short, as an intuitive understanding, for which end and means, objective and subjective, are one, or, in other words, as an intelligence whose consciousness of itself is or contains the existence of all that is object for it.

This new view of the things in themselves as *noumena* or ideals of reason involves a new attitude of thought towards them, different from that dogmatic attitude which is provisionally adopted in the *Analytic*. Accordingly, we now find Kant speaking of them, not as things which exist independently of their being conceived, but as "problematical conceptions" of which we cannot even determine whether they correspond to any objects at all. They are "limitative" notions which have a negative value, in so far as they keep open a vacant space beyond experience, but do not enable us to fill that space with any positive realities. They are like dark lanterns which cast light upon the empirical world, and show

what are its boundaries, but leave their own nature in obscurity. All that we can say of the noumenal self or subject is, that it corresponds to the unity implied in all knowledge, but whether there is such a self, independent of the process of empirical synthesis and the self-consciousness which accompanies that process, we cannot tell. All that we can say of the noumenal reality of the objective world is, that it corresponds to the idea of the objects of experience as a completed whole in themselves apart from the process whereby we know them, but whether there is any such real world independent of the process of experience, it is impossible to say. Lastly, all that we can say of God is, that He corresponds to the idea of the unity of all things with the mind that knows them,—an ideal which is involved in all knowledge,—but whether the realisation of this idea in an intuitive understanding is even possible, we have no means of determining, however we may suspect that understanding and sensibility are "branches springing from the same unknown root." The *Criticism of Pure Reason* ends, therefore, in a kind of see-saw between two forms of consciousness—a thinking consciousness,

which transcends experience and sets before us an idea of absolute reality, but which cannot attain to any knowledge or even certitude of any object corresponding to this idea, and an empirical consciousness, which gives us true knowledge of its objects, but whose objects are determined as merely phenomenal and not absolutely real.

The equipoise thus maintained between the empirical and the intelligible world is, however, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, overbalanced in favour of the latter. What the theoretical reason could not do "in that it was weak through the flesh," through its dependence on the very empirical consciousness which it sought to transcend, is possible to the practical reason, because it is primarily determined by itself. In our moral consciousness we find ourselves under a law which calls upon us to *act* as beings who are absolutely self-determined or free, and which, therefore, assures us that our intelligible self is our real self, and conclusively determines our empirical self in contrast with it as phenomenal. Thus the moral law gives reality to the intelligible world; or, as Kant expresses it, "the idea of an intelligible world is a point of view beyond the phenomenal which the

reason sees itself compelled to take up in order to think of itself as practical." In other words, the moral law presupposes freedom or self-determination in the rational being as such, and makes him regard himself, not merely as a link in the chain of conditioned existences in time and space, but as the original source of his own life. The blank space beyond the phenomenal thus begins to be filled up by the idea of a free causality, which in its turn postulates a world adequate and conformable to itself. And the man who, as an empiric individuality, is obliged to regard himself merely as an individual being, determined by other individual beings and things according to the law of necessity, is authorised as a moral being to treat this apparent necessity as having its reality in freedom, and to look upon himself as the denizen of a spiritual world, where nothing is determined for him from without which is not simply the expression of his own self-determination from within. "Thus we have found, what Aristotle could not find, a fixed point on which reason can set its lever, not in any present or future world, but in its own inner idea of freedom,—a point fixed for it by the immovable

moral law, as a secure basis from which it can move the human will, in spite of the opposition of all the powers of nature."[1] Starting from this idea of freedom, therefore, Kant proceeds to reconstruct for *faith* the unseen world, which in the *Critique of Pure Reason* he had denied as an object of *knowledge*. Nor is he content to leave the two worlds in sharp antithesis to each other, but even in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and still more in the *Critique of Judgment*, he brings them into relation to each other, and so gives to theoretical reason a kind of authority to use, for the explanation of the phenomenal world, those ideas which otherwise it would be compelled to regard as illusive.

In all this, however, it is difficult to avoid seeing a partial retractation of Kant's first view as to the irreconcilable opposition of the phenomenal and the noumenal. For, in the first place, the moral imperative is addressed to a self which is at one and the same time regarded in both characters, and which is called upon to subsume under the moral law actions which otherwise derive their character and meaning from the relations

[1] Kant, i. 638 (Rosenkranz' edition).

of the phenomenal world. That the particular nature of men as phenomenal individuals can be the means of realising the universal law of reason, is implied in all Kant's statements of the latter, and particularly in his conception of men as constituting together a "kingdom of ends"; for it is difficult to conceive this kingdom otherwise than as an organic unity of society, in which each individual, by reason of his special tendencies and capacities, has a definite office to fulfil in realising the universal principle that binds all the members of the kingdom to each other. The *Summum Bonum*, again, is said to consist in the union of happiness with goodness, *i.e.*, of the empirical conditions of man's individual life as a sensible subject with the pure self-determination of the intelligible self; and God is postulated as a *Deus ex machina* to bind together these two unrelated elements,—a conception which shows the difficulty into which Kant has brought himself by defining them as unrelated.

In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant makes a final effort to escape from the dualism involved in his original analysis of experience. For in that work he maintains that the consciousness of the beautiful

and the sublime is or involves a harmony of the understanding or the reason with sense; and, what is still more important, he points out that the idea of organic unity, without which we cannot explain the phenomena of life, contains in it a possibility of the reconciliation of freedom and necessity, of the intelligible and the phenomenal. This idea, he argues, we are authorised by our moral consciousness to apply to the whole course of the things in the phenomenal world, and so to regard it as a process to realise the moral ideal. No doubt he again partially retracts this view, when he declares that we must treat the idea of final causality as a *subjective* principle of judgment, which is to be regarded as necessary not for all intelligence, but only for us as finite intelligences. But such saving clauses, in which Kant recurs to the dualism with which he started, cannot hide from us how near he has come to the renunciation of it.

When we regard Kant in this way as asserting from one point of view an absolute limit, which from another point of view he permits us to transcend, it becomes obvious that his philosophy is in an unstable equilibrium, which cannot but

be disturbed by any one who attempts to develop or even to restate his ideas. Hence we need not wonder that those who take in earnest his denunciations of any attempt to transcend experience generally,—like Professor Huxley,—reject as worthless all Kant's later work; and that, on the other side, those who take in earnest his ideas of freedom, of organic unity, of an intuitive understanding, and of a *Summum Bonum* in which freedom and necessity meet together, are compelled to break through the arbitrary line which he drew between knowledge and belief. In favour of the former course it is easy in many places to appeal to the letter of Kant. In favour of the latter it need only be pointed out that, in Kant's view, all experience rests upon, or is in its development guided by, those ideas which yet he will not permit us to treat as sources of knowledge. Hence the principles of the *Critique* cannot legitimately be used against metaphysic, except by those who are prepared to admit the ideas of reason, up to the point to which he admits them, as ideas that limit and direct our experience,—while rejecting all use of them to cast light upon that which is beyond experience. In

other words, those who would adopt his alternative must maintain the possibility of a purely negative knowledge, *i.e.*, the possibility of the knowledge of a limit by one who yet cannot go beyond it. They must show how it is possible for us to have an ideal of knowledge which enables us to criticise experience without enabling us to transform it; they must show how ideas of the supersensible can so far be present to our thought as to make visible the boundaries of the prison of sense in which we are confined, without in any way enabling us to escape from it.

Is this possible? We may gather up the Kantian antithesis in the assertion that experience is the imperfect realisation of an ideal of knowledge derived from reason, by means of materials derived from sense and understanding, the nature of which is such that they can never be brought into correspondence with the ideal. But this ideal, in all its three forms, as we have seen, is simply the idea of a pure unity or identity in which all differences are lost or dissolved—whether they be differences in inner or differences in outer experience, or, finally, the differences between the inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective.

Kant's view therefore is, in effect, this: that thought carries with it the consciousness of an identity or unity, to which our actual experience in none of its forms fully corresponds. On the other hand, Kant does not hesitate, with equal emphasis, to condemn the identity of thought as "empty" and subjective, because it does not contain in itself nor can evolve from itself the complex matter of experience. But this alternate condemnation of experience as unreal from the point of view of the ideas, and of the ideas as unreal from the point of view of experience, seems to show that *both* are unreal, as being abstract elements, which have no value save in their relation to each other, and which lose all their meaning when separated from the unity to which they belong. According to this view, ideas and experience, noumena and phenomena, if they are opposed, are also necessarily related to each other. If our empirical consciousness of the world of objects in space and time, as determined by the categories, does not correspond to the unity or identity of thought which is our ideal of knowledge, yet that idea of unity or identity is set up by thought in *relation* to experience, and

cannot, therefore, be essentially irreconcilable with it. The two terms may be opposed, but their opposition cannot be absolute, seeing that they are in essential relation to each other. It is a great logical error not to discern that a negative relation is still a relation, *i.e.*, that it has a positive unity beyond it. This positive unity may not, indeed, be consciously present to us in our immediate apprehension of the relation in question, but is necessarily implied in it. Now it is just because, in his separation of noumena and phenomena, Kant omits to note their essential relativity, that he is forced to regard the former as a set of abstract identities of which nothing can be known, and the latter as the imperfect products of a synthesis which can never be completed or brought to a final unity. Yet the value of his whole treatment of the ideas of reason in relation to our intellectual and moral experience arises from the fact that, in practice, he does not hold to this abstract separation of the two elements. Ideas absolutely incommensurable with experience could neither stimulate nor guide our empirical synthesis; they could not even be brought into any connection with it. When,

therefore, Kant brings them into this connection, he necessarily alters their meaning. Hence the pure abstract identity which excludes all difference is changed in its application into the idea of an organic unity, of which the highest type is found in self-consciousness with its transparent difference of the subjective and objective self. It would be absurd and meaningless to say that science seeks to reduce experience to an abstract identity, in which there is no difference, unless for this were tacitly substituted what is really an entirely different proposition, that science seeks to find in the infinitely diversified world of space and time that unity in difference of which self-consciousness has in itself the pattern. It is in reference to the former kind of identity—the abstract oneness of formal logic—that Kant proves that it is impossible for experience to be made adequate to ideas. But it is only of the latter kind of identity—the oneness of self-consciousness—that it can be said that it furnishes a guiding principle to scientific investigation or an ideal of knowledge.

The same confusion is still more evident in Kant's account of our moral experience, in

dealing with which he directly attempts to get synthetic propositions out of the pure identity of reason, in other words, to draw definite moral laws out of the logical principle of non-contradiction. Whatever success he attains is gained by substituting for the formal principle of *self-consistency* the positive idea of *consistency with the self*, and again by conceiving this self as a concrete individual, the member of a society, and so standing in essential relation to other selves. The pure abstraction from all the external results of action and from all motives of desire, which at the beginning of the *Metaphysic of Ethics* Kant declares to be essential to morality, is modified and indeed transformed, as we go on, by the admissions that other rational beings are *not* external to us in any sense that excludes their good from being an end of our endeavour, and that the desires are *not* irrational and immoral except in so far as they are directed to the pleasures of the sensuous individual (which in a conscious being they never entirely are). Both in the speculative and in the practical sphere, therefore, the absolute opposition of the ideal or noumenal to the empirical disappears, as soon as

Kant attempts to apply it. For, in both, the abstract identity of formal logic, which is really the meaning of the noumenon as absolutely opposed to, and incommensurable with experience, gives way to the unity of self-consciousness,—a unity which is so far from being *absolutely* opposed to the difference of the empirical consciousness that it necessarily implies it. For self-consciousness presupposes the consciousness of objects, and though it is opposed to that consciousness, it is essentially correlated with it; hence its opposition to it cannot be regarded as absolute, or incapable of being transcended.

These considerations may throw some light on the relation of the *Analytic* and *Dialectic* of Kant, and on the nature of the opposition of noumenon and phenomenon as it is presented in the latter. In the deduction of the categories, Kant pointed out the essential relation of the objective world of experience to what he called the "transcendental unity of apperception"; *i.e.*, he pointed out that the unity of consciousness is implied in all its objects. This unity, he further showed, must be conceived as "capable of self-consciousness"; but it actually becomes conscious of self

only in relation, though also in opposition, to the other objects determined by it. Now it is this consciousness of itself in opposition to other objects which is the source of Kant's "ideas of reason," of the dissatisfaction of the mind with its empirical knowledge, even in its scientific form, and of the demand for a higher kind of knowledge to which experience is not adequate. That a standard is set up for experience by which it is condemned, is simply a result of the further development of that unity which is implied in experience—a result of the progress of thought from consciousness to self-consciousness, and of the contrast between the former and the latter. The problem with which Kant's *Dialectic* attempts to deal, and which it treats as insoluble, is, therefore, simply the problem of *raising consciousness to the form of self-consciousness;* in other words, of attaining to a knowledge of the world of experience as not merely a "synthetic," and therefore imperfect, unity of things external to each other, but as an organic unity of transparent differences, a self-differentiating, self-integrating unity, such as seems to be presented to us in pure self-consciousness. Nor can this problem be regarded as insoluble;

for the unity of self-consciousness is identical with the unity of consciousness; it is only that unity become self-conscious. Hence the point of view at which consciousness and self-consciousness seem to be absolutely opposed to each other,—the highest point of view which Kant *distinctly* reaches,—can be regarded only as a stage of transition from the point at which their relative difference and opposition is not yet developed, to the point at which they are seen to be the factors or elements of a still higher unity.

The later philosophy of Germany, from Kant to Hegel, is little more than the development of the idea just stated in its twofold aspect. In the first place, it is an attempt to shew what is involved in the idea of thought or self-consciousness as in itself an organic whole, a many-in-one, a unity which expresses itself in difference, yet so that the difference remains transparent, and therefore is immediately recognised as expression of the unity. In the second place, it is an attempt to bridge over the difference between thought or self-consciousness and the external world of experience, and to show that this opposition also is subordinated to a higher unity. Or, to put it

more directly, the idealistic philosophy of Germany seeks, on the one hand, to develop a logic or metaphysic which bases itself, not, like formal logic, on the idea of bare identity, but on the idea of self-consciousness; and, on the other hand, to show, in a philosophy of nature and spirit, how, by means of this logic, the opposition of thought to its object, or of the *a priori* to the *a posteriori* in knowledge, may be transcended. In the third and fourth sections of this article something more will be said of the manner in which this task was fulfilled. Here only a few words are necessary to sum up the results reached, and to give more distinctness to the new ideal of knowledge which those results suggest.

We have seen that Kant's critical attitude involved two things,—on the one hand, the assertion that the existence we know is necessarily existence for thought, and, on the other hand, the denial that that which exists for our thought is absolute reality, a denial which again involves the presence to our thought of an ideal of knowledge, by which our actual knowledge is condemned. This ideal, however, was falsely conceived by Kant as an identity without any

difference, and, in this sense, he does not hesitate to apply it even to self-consciousness itself. For, in a remarkable passage,[1] he attempts to prove that the consciousness of self is not a knowledge of the self, by a simple reference to the duality of the self knowing and the self known, arguing that the ego "stands in its own way," just because it exists only *for itself*, *i.e.*, because in knowing itself it presupposes itself. Kant evidently thinks that to know the real self it would be necessary to apprehend it in simple identity, as purely an object without reference to a subject, or purely a subject without reference to an object. Yet to this it seems sufficient to answer that such an object or subject would lose its character as object or subject, and would become equivalent to mere being in general; and that, as being in general is a mere abstraction, to know it cannot be the ideal of knowledge. If therefore there be a unity or identity of thought which is not realised in experience, and in reference to which we can regard experience as an imperfect form of knowledge, it cannot be found in this abstract identity of being. In truth, as we have seen, it

[1] *Kritik*, p. 279 (Rosenkranz' edition), cf. Hegel, v. p. 258.

is found in that very idea of self-consciousness which Kant is criticising. Just because we are self-conscious, and therefore oppose the unity of the conscious self to the manifoldness of the world in space and time, do we seek *in* the world of space and time for a transparent unity which we cannot at first find there. But, when this is seen, we find in Kant himself the partial solution of the difficulty. Self-consciousness presupposes consciousness; for, while the apprehension of objects in consciousness is possible only in relation to the unity of the self, yet it is only in relation to and distinction from these objects that we are conscious of that unity. Hence the two opposites, self and not-self, are bound together, and presuppose a unity which reveals itself in their opposition, and which, when made explicit, must reconcile them. If, therefore, self-consciousness, in its first opposition to consciousness, gives rise to an ideal of knowledge to which our empirical knowledge of objects is inadequate, this arises from the fact that not only empirical knowledge, but also the ideal to which it is opposed, is imperfect, or that they both point to a unity which is manifested in their difference, and which

is capable of containing and resolving it. In other words, the opposition of science to its ideal, which Kant has stated in his *Antinomies*, is not an absolute opposition, but one the origin and end of which can be seen.

This opposition reaches its highest point in the contrast between the transparent unity of self-consciousness, in which the difference of knower and known is evanescent, and the essential manifoldness and self-externality of the world in space, in which the differences seem to be insoluble. We must, indeed, think of self-consciousness as having life in itself and therefore as differentiating itself from itself; but this differentiation is held within the limit of its unity, it is a separation of movements which are separated only as they are united. On the other hand, the world in space presents itself as the sphere of external determination, in which things are primarily disunited and act only as they are acted on from without, and in which this external influence never goes so far as to destroy their reciprocal externality. In this sense it is that the opposition of mind and matter was taken by Des Cartes, and it is a survival of the same mode of thought

that leads many even now to draw absolute lines of division between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, between ideas and facts, between spiritual and natural. Kant and Fichte give a new aspect to the difficulty by showing that the difficulty is one of reconciling consciousness and self-consciousness, and that in consciousness there is already present the unity which is manifested in self-consciousness, as, on the other hand, it is only through consciousness and in opposition to it that self-consciousness is possible. And Fichte made a further step when he attempted to show that the categories and the forms of perception, time and space, which Kant had taken as inexplicable facts, are implied in this contrast of consciousness and self-consciousness. The error that clings to Fichte's speculations is, however, that he treats consciousness merely as a necessary illusion which exists simply with a view to self-consciousness, and hence is led to regard self-consciousness itself—because it is essentially related to this necessary illusion—as a schema or image of an unknowable absolute. In fact, in the end Fichte falls back upon the abstract identity in which Kant had found his noumenon, and his philosophy seems to lose itself in mysticism. Even

Schelling, though he saw that the absolute unity must be one that transcends the difference of self and not-self, did not finally escape the tendency to merge all difference in absolute oneness. On the other hand, it was the endeavour of Hegel to proceed in the opposite way,—not to lose self-consciousness or subjectivity in a mere unity of substance, but rather to show that the absolute substance can be truly defined only as a self-conscious subject. And just because he did this, he was prepared to take a further step, and to regard the external world, not as Fichte regarded it, as merely the opposite of spirit, nor as Schelling regarded it, as merely the repetition and co-equal of spirit, but rather as its necessary manifestation, or as that in and through which alone it can realise itself. His doctrine therefore might be summed up in two propositions,—first, that the absolute substance is spiritual or self-conscious, and, secondly, that the absolute subject or spirit can be conceived as realising itself only through that very world of externality which at first appears as its opposite. In both respects Hegel's philosophy reverses the *via negativa* of mysticism, and teaches that it is only through the exhaustion of difference that

the unity of science, of which the mind contains in itself the certitude, is to be realised. For mind or spirit, viewed in itself, is conceived as a self-differentiating unity, a unity which exists only through opposition of itself to itself. And it is but a necessary result of such a conception that spirit can fully realise its unity only through a world which in the first instance must present itself as the extreme opposite of spirit. Hence the process of thought in itself, which is exhibited in the logic, ends in the opposition to thought of a world which is its negative counterpart. And the "absolute spirit" of Hegel is thus, not pure self-consciousness, but that more concrete unity of self-consciousness with itself which it attains through and by means of this world.

The effect of this view upon the relation of metaphysic to science, which we are at present considering, is noticeable. It does not, as is often supposed, supersede science by an *a priori* construction of the universe, nor does it leave the results of science unchanged and simply provide for it a deeper foundation. The latter was the point at which Kant and Fichte stopped; for, while they showed the relativity of experience to

the principle of self-consciousness, they conceived that the function of metaphysic is completed in showing the phenomenal character of the objects of science, and in reserving a free space beyond the phenomenal world for "God, freedom, and immortality." Schelling, on the other hand, as he did not adopt this merely negative view of the relation of spirit to nature or of *a priori* to empirical truth, was obliged to reinterpret the latter by the former. As, however, he did not recognise any distinctions which were not merely quantitative, he was led to apply the same easy key to every lock, and to think that he had explained all the different forms of existence, organic and inorganic, when he had merely pointed out a certain analogy between them. The metaphysic of Hegel, whatever may be said of the actual philosophy of nature produced by its author, contains no necessity for any such arbitrary procedure. In his *Logic*, indeed, he attempts to give us *in abstracto* the movement of thought in itself, from its simplest determination of being as qualitative or quantitative, through the reflective categories of substance and cause, up to its full consciousness of itself in its organic unity. And in

so doing he of course gives us an account of the various categories which science uses in the interpretation of nature.[1] He further attempts to show that the highest categories of science are in themselves imperfect and self-contradictory,—in other words, that they mark a stage of thought which falls short of that unity of being and knowing after which science is striving, and which is the presupposition as well as the goal of all intelligence. But, while he does this, he clearly acknowledges two things,—in the first place, that nature is essentially different from pure self-consciousness, and that therefore logic can never by direct evolution of its categories anticipate the investigations of science; and, in the second place, that the final interpretation of nature through the highest categories presupposes its interpretation by the lower categories, and cannot be directly achieved without it. In other words, science must first determine the laws of nature according to the principles of causality and reciprocity, ere philosophy can be in a position to discover the ultimate meaning of

[1] This subject—the progress of thought from lower to higher categories and methods—will be more fully discussed in the third section.

nature by the aid of higher principles. "The philosophy of nature," says Hegel, "takes up the material, which physical science by direct dealing with experience has prepared for it, at the point to which science has brought it, and again transforms this formed material without going back to experience to verify it. Science must, therefore, work into the hands of philosophy, in order that philosophy in its turn may translate the lower universality of the understanding realised by science into the higher universality of reason, and may show how in the light of this higher universality the intelligible world takes the aspect of a whole which has its necessity in itself. The philosophic way of looking at things is not a capricious attempt, once in a way for a change, to walk upon one's head after one has got tired of walking upon one's feet, or to transform one's work-a-day face by painting it over; but, *it is because the scientific manner of knowing does not satisfy the whole demand of intelligence, philosophy must supplement it by another manner of knowing.*"[1]

The result then may be briefly expressed thus. Kant and his successors showed the relativity of

[1] Hegel, vii. p 18.

the object of knowledge to the knowing mind. He thus pointed out that the ordinary consciousness, and even science, are abstract and imperfect modes of knowing, in so far as in their determination of objects they take no account of a factor which is always present, to wit, the knowing subject. For *their* purposes, indeed, this abstraction is justifiable and necessary, for by it they are enabled within their prescribed limits to give a more complete view of these objects in their relation to each other, than if the attempt had been made to regard them also in relation to the knowing subject. At the same time the scientific result so arrived at is imperfect and incomplete, and it has to be reconsidered in the light of a philosophy which retracts this provisional abstraction. For it must be remembered that the fact that science looks at things only in their relation to each other, and not to the knowing mind, narrows the points of view or categories under which it is able to regard them, or, in other words, limits the questions which the mind is able to put to nature. Just because science does not treat its objects as essentially related to the mind, it is unable to rise to what Hegel calls

the point of view of reason, or of the "*Begriff*"; *i.e.*, it is obliged to treat objects and their relations under a set of categories, the highest of which are those of causality and reciprocity, and it is incapable of attaining to the conception of their organic unity. In other words, it is able to reach only a *synthetic* unity of *given* differences, and it cannot discover a principle of unity out of which the differences spring and to which they return. Now philosophy goes beyond science just because, along with the idea of the relativity of things to the mind, it brings in the conception of such a unity. Its highest aim is, therefore, not merely, as Kant still held, to secure a place for the supersensible beyond the region of experience. It is to reinterpret experience, in the light of a unity which is presupposed in it, but which cannot be made conscious or explicit until the relation of experience to the thinking self is seen,—the unity of all things with each other and with the mind that knows them.

2. *Relation of Metaphysic to Psychology.*—It has already been shown that the doctrine that the thinking subject is presupposed in all objects of knowledge—or, in other words, that existence

means existence for a conscious self—is not to be taken in a psychological sense. The idea that all science is based on psychology, and that, therefore, metaphysic and pyschology are identical, cannot be retained by any one who has entered into the full meaning of the Kantian criticism. It is, however, so natural a misinterpretation of it, and it is so much favoured by the letter of the very book in which it was first decisively refuted, that it will be useful to point out more directly the fallacy involved in it, especially as this will place us in a better position to determine the true relation of the two parts of philosophy thus confounded.

The misunderstanding first took a definite form in the introduction to Locke's *Essay*, in which he proposes to provide against any undue application of the intellectual powers of man to problems which are too high for them, by first examining and measuring the powers themselves. Stated in this way, it is obvious that the proposal involves an absurdity; for we have nothing to measure with, except the very powers that are to be measured. To see round our knowledge and find its boundary, we must stand outside of it, and where is such a standing ground to be found?

We cannot by knowing prescribe limits to knowledge, or, if we seem to be able to do so, it can only be because we compare our actual knowledge with some idea of knowledge which we presuppose. In this way the ancient Sceptics—and modern writers like Sir W. Hamilton and Mr. Spencer who have followed them—turned the duality involved in the idea of knowledge against its unity, and argued that because we cannot know the object except as different from and related to the subject, we cannot know it as it is in itself. Obviously in this argument it is involved that, in true or absolute knowledge, the object must not be distinguished at all from the subject,—to which the easy answer is that *without* such distinction knowledge would be impossible. The sceptic argument, therefore, lands us in the unhappy case of the German proverb: "If water chokes us, what shall we drink?" The object cannot be known if it *is* distinguished from the subject, and it cannot be known if it is *not* distinguished from the subject. Obviously the one objection is as good as the other, and both combined only show that the idea of knowledge involves distinction as well as unity, and unity as well as distinction.

The sceptic insists on one of these characteristics to the exclusion of the other, and condemns our actual knowledge because it contains both. In Kant there is undoubtedly some trace of the same fallacy, in so far as the idea, by contrast with which he condemns the objects of experience as phenomenal, is the idea of an abstract identity without any difference; but we have seen that with him this abstract identity is on the point of passing into an altogether different idea—the idea of self-consciousness as the type of knowledge.

It appears, then, that the idea of measuring our powers before we employ them rests on a paralogism; for it really means that we isolate one of the elements of the idea of knowledge, and then condemn knowledge for having other elements in it. It is possible to criticise and condemn special conceptions as not conforming to our idea of knowledge; but it is not possible to criticise the idea of knowledge itself; all we can do is to explain it. It is possible to see the limited and hypothetical character of certain of our ideas or explanations of things, because we are conscious that in developing them we have left out of account certain of the elements which are

necessary to the whole truth; but this criticism itself implies, as the standard to which we appeal, the consciousness of truth and reality, a consciousness which we cannot further criticise. Here, therefore, we come upon what must seem, to all who think it admissible to question the very possibility of knowledge, an inevitable reasoning in a circle. We can answer objections only by means of the very idea which they dispute. But the answer is nevertheless a good one; for the objector also stands within the very circle which he seeks to break, and has no means of breaking it except itself. As soon as he speaks he can be refuted by his own words; for his doubts also presuppose that unity of the intelligence and the intelligible world which he pretends to deny.

The error, however, cannot be fully corrected until we consider what it is that gives it plausibility. The confusion of the metaphysical with the psychological problem is due to the fact that the being who is the subject of knowledge, for whom all exists that does exist, appears to be one, and only one, of the many objects of knowledge. When we say that existence means only an

existence for a thinking self, we seem to be identifying the whole world with the feelings and ideas of men, *i.e.*, with certain phenomena that belong to the life of a class of beings which only forms a part of that world,—phenomena, moreover, that are not exactly the same in any two of that class of beings. If we are to escape this difficulty, it is obvious that we must be able to separate the conscious self or subject, as it is implied in all knowledge, from the nature of man as a being who "though formally self-conscious" is yet "part of this partial world," *i.e.*, one of the objects which we know along with and in distinction from other objects, and in whom "the self-consciousness which is in itself complete, and which in its completeness includes the world as its object," is only progressively realised.[1] Metaphysic has to deal with conditions of the knowable, and hence with self-consciousness as that unity which is implied in all that is and is known. Psychology has to inquire how this self-consciousness is realised or developed in man, in whom the consciousness of

[1] Green's General Introduction to Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature*, § 152. Works, i. 131.

self grows with the consciousness of a world in space and time, of which he individually is only a part, and only to parts of which he stands in immediate relation. In considering the former question, we are considering the sphere within which all knowledge and all objects of knowledge are contained. In considering the latter, we are selecting one particular object or class of objects within this sphere,—although no doubt it must make a great difference in our treatment of this object that we have to consider it as existing not only for us but for itself. If nature "becomes self-conscious in man," it is impossible to treat man *merely* as one among the other objects of nature. But it is not less true that he *is* one of those objects, and, in this point of view, the department of science or philosophy that deals with his life is as distinct from metaphysic —which deals with the conditions of all knowing and being—as is astronomy or physics. In both cases we have before us objects which we may consider in themselves, apart from their relations to the conscious subject; and in both cases we must take cognisance of these relations, if we would have a complete and final view of those

objects. It is possible to have a purely objective psychology, *i.e.*, a psychology which abstracts from the relation of man to the mind that knows him, just as it is possible to have a purely objective science of nature. Such a natural science of man, however, will necessarily abstract at the same time from the fact, that in man there is manifested that universal principle, in relation to which all things are and are known. In other words, it will omit that distinctive characteristic of man's being, in virtue of which he is a subject of knowledge and a moral agent. Hence the abstraction in this case is more likely to lead to positive error, more likely to produce not only an imperfect but a distorted view of the object. Inorganic nature, if we take it *in itself*, is not untruly viewed, under the categories of causality and reciprocity, as a collection of objects externally determined by each other; the error lies only in taking it as if it could exist in itself. Even organic beings do not suffer much injustice in being brought under such categories; for, though, as living and still more as sensitive beings, they involve, in themselves and in their relation to the world, a kind of unity of differences to which

the categories of external relation imperfectly correspond, yet they are not such unities *for themselves*, but only *for us*. In other words, the principle, through which they are and are known, is still external to them. Hence also they are determined by outward influences, though these influences act rather as stimuli to what we may call the self-determined movement of their own life than as mechanical or chemical forces which change it. But in man, in so far as he is self-conscious,—and it is self-consciousness that makes him man,—the unity through which all things are and are known is manifested; and therefore he is emancipated, or at least is continually emancipating himself, from the law of external influence. Nature and necessity exist for him as that from which his life starts, in relation to which he becomes conscious of himself, against which he has to assert himself, and in the complete overcoming of which lies the end of all his endeavour. Nature is the negative rather than the positive starting-point of his existence, the presupposition against which he reacts rather than on which he proceeds; and, therefore, to treat him simply as a natural being is even more in-

accurate and misleading than to forget or deny his relation to nature altogether. A true psychology must, however, avoid both errors; it must conceive man as at once spiritual and natural; it must find a reconciliation of freedom and necessity. It must face all the difficulties involved in the conception of the absolute principle of self-consciousness,—through which all things are and are known,—as manifesting itself in the life of a being like man, who "comes to himself" only by a long process of development out of the unconsciousness of a merely animal existence.

This problem first presented itself in a distinct form in the discussions of the Socratic school as to the nature of knowledge, discussions which turned mainly upon the relation of the conscious to the unconscious element in thought. Socrates, by his method more than by any direct statement, drew attention to the fact that all particular judgments in morals involve or presuppose a universal principle. At the same time he pointed out that, so far from this universal principle being known to those who are continually making such judgments, they are not even conscious of its existence. They constantly use general terms whose meaning they

have never even thought of defining. The beginning of a rational life for them must therefore lie in their becoming conscious of their ignorance, *i.e.*, conscious that they have been all along judging, and therefore acting, on untested and even unknown assumptions. They must bring the unconscious universal to the light of day and define it, for until that is done, it is impossible to live a moral, that is, a rational life. "Virtue is knowledge," *i.e.*, it is acting, not according to opinions, or particular judgments, judgments whose universal is unknown, and which therefore may be regarded as expressing merely the impulses or habits of the individual, but in view of a universal principle determined by reason.

The one-sidedness of this view—which absolutely condemns as vice all virtue that is not based on conscious principle—was partly corrected by another part of the doctrine of Socrates, who taught that knowledge is something that must be evolved from within the mind, and not merely communicated to it from without. For this implies that the moral principle may be present in men's minds, and may rule their thoughts and actions, long before they become directly conscious of it. They

are rational although they have never thought about reason, and they do not wait for scientific ethics to judge and act morally, any more than they wait for logic to reason correctly. It is this line of thought which is universalised and mythically expressed by Plato in his doctrine of "reminiscence." According to this myth, we were conscious of ideas or universals in our pre-natal state; we forgot them in the shock of birth into this mortal life; but in feeling or sharing the rapture of the poet or the lover we recall them, as identified or confused with particular objects which "are like them, or partake in them." The same explanation is given of the practical skill of the general and the statesman, and even of the "right opinion" which guides the ordinary good man.[1] Such opinion is neither knowledge nor ignorance: not knowledge, for in it general principles or ideas are not present to the mind *as* ideas, and therefore the particular objects cannot be distinctly subsumed under them; yet not ignorance, for the ideas are after all present, though wrapped up in the particulars or confused with them. Nay, in the *Theætetus*, Plato endeavours to show that the

[1] *Meno.* 99 C.

pure particular without the universal, sensations without ideas, cannot enter into our consciousness at all, and that therefore the lowest point to which a conscious being can descend is "opinion," in which particular and universal, sensible and intelligible, are mingled together. In other words, no conscious being can apprehend the particular except through the universal, though that universal may be present only *in* consciousness and not *to* it. The task of philosophy is therefore only to make men "recollect" themselves, *i.e.*, to make *self-conscious* that universality of thought in which all rational beings "partake," or which, in the language of later philosophy, constitutes reason. The imperfection of Plato's view lay, however, in this, that, while he clearly recognised that the condition of all consciousness of the particular is the universal, he did not see with equal clearness that the universal has a meaning only in relation to the particular. And this tendency to separate universal from particular is naturally accompanied by a tendency to set the subjective against the objective, and to regard the world, not as the manifestation of reason, but as a dualistic world, in which reason is chained to a lower principle

—a world which can at best only give a hint or suggestion to the mind which may enable it to "recollect" itself and recover for itself its own treasures. Thus the false method of introspection, the "high *priori* road" of mysticism, was at least opened up by Plato, if he did not himself altogether forsake the narrower and harder way to the spiritual world through nature and experience.

The great step in advance taken by Aristotle was due to his seeing the danger of this tendency. Those, however, who have maintained that Aristotle is the great *a posteriori* philosopher, as Plato is the great *a priori* philosopher, have entirely mistaken the bearing of Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic theory. As strongly as Plato does Aristotle maintain that reason is *δυνάμει πάντα τὰ νοητά*, and that, therefore, the apprehension of truth *by* the mind is not a mere external communication of it *to* the mind, but rather is the mind coming to a consciousness of itself. As firmly as Plato does he declare that truth in its highest form is self-evidencing, *i.e.*, that the principles of science, the laws of nature, when once they have been discovered, are seen to be true by their own light. His statements to this effect have

been neglected or explained away, because they were supposed to be inconsistent with his still more frequently reiterated assertions that it is only from experience and by induction that the truth of things can be discovered. Writers of a later day,—who came to Aristotle with an idea of a fixed opposition between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, and who held that the only possible alternatives were *either* to divide knowledge between the two *or* to explain away one of them,—could not comprehend that Aristotle might be in earnest *both* in asserting that knowledge is derived from experience, *and* in asserting that it is an apprehension by reason of that which is identical with itself and needs no extraneous evidence. But Aristotle started with no such fixed opposition. On the contrary, any one who reads the last chapter of the *Posterior Analytics* will see that he had no difficulty in maintaining that knowledge begins in the apprehension of τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον in sense perception, and that it proceeds from many perceptions to experience, and from many experiences to science; while at the same time he declared that the principles of science have their evidence in themselves. And

the meaning of this declaration is shown in the *De Anima*, where we find him speaking of knowledge as the realisation in the "passive reason" of man of an "active reason" which is eternal and unchangeable, and which in the consciousness of itself includes the knowledge of all things. Of this realisation, indeed, there is in man only the potentiality or capacity, but just because this is a pure or universal capacity, because, as Aristotle puts it, it has no quality or determination of its own to stand between it and its objects, it is a capacity in which the absolute reason can realise itself, a capacity of knowing all things.[1] Here we have Plato's myth of reminiscence freed from the metaphor of memory, and reduced to scientific terms; for that myth simply meant that the evolution of knowledge is the development of the mind to that consciousness of itself, and of all that is potentially in it. Only, by the combination of this doctrine with the idea of the necessity of induction, Aristotle guards against the purely subjective interpretation to which in Plato it was liable. For the process by which the mind "comes to itself" is conceived as a process by

[1] *De Anima*, iii. ch. 4.

which at the same time it rises from the particular to the universal, from the *γνώριμα ἡμῖν* to the *γνώριμα ἁπλῶς*, from the bare apprehension of the facts of experience to the knowledge of them through their principles or laws.

Yet Aristotle was as little able as Plato to work out fully a theory of the relation between the universal and the individual reason; and the cause of this failure was in both cases substantially the same. In Plato's philosophy, the ideal tended to divorce itself from the phenomenal world in such wise that the latter was regarded only as suggesting or partaking in the former, but not as entirely explicable by it. It was not merely that, to the mind of the individual in its progress, the veil was only gradually lifted from the rationality of the world, but that in the world there was an irrational element from which the mind could save itself only by flight into the region of abstraction. And, though Aristotle by his doctrine of the essential relation of ideas to experience, or of the development of the mind to the acquisition of knowledge of the world, seemed to be on the way to correct this error, yet he too shrinks from regarding the phenomenal

world as in itself intelligible. To him also an irrational matter mingles with things, and is in them a source of contingency and imperfection. Chance is not merely the reflection upon the world of our imperfect knowledge, but a fact of experience, and there is therefore a region in which our best science cannot rise above generality to universality. In this way there remains for Aristotle an absolute *a posteriori*, a reality which cannot be understood, and which we can scarcely conceive as existing at all for the divine intelligence. At this point the Aristotelian philosophy appears to stand between two alternatives; *either* that, in the sense of pantheism, the finite world and its contingency is an illusion, *or* that it is contingent only for the growing intelligence of man, which fully understands neither itself nor the world which is its object. Aristotle, however, does not choose either horn of the dilemma, and leaves us therefore with an unresolved dualism between thought and its object; and this again necessarily involves a dualism between the active reason, which, as he asserts, realises itself in man, and the passive reason which constitutes his nature as a finite being.

In the Middle Ages the Platonic and Aristotelian idea that the apprehension of objective truth is one with the evolution of the mind to self-consciousness seemed to be entirely lost. Knowledge of the finite world was regarded as of little value, and knowledge of the infinite was conceived to be something given on authority, and in reference to which the mind was confined to an attitude of passive reception or implicit faith. No greater slavery of the spirit can be conceived than that in which even the truths of religion and morality —the truths that regard the inmost life of the spirit itself—were taken as a lesson to be learned by rote from the lips of a teacher. Yet the consciousness that such truth, if it was to be received by the mind, still more if it was to transform the mind, could not be entirely foreign to it, found a voice in the scholastic philosophy. And the compromise or truce between faith and reason expressed in the saying of Anselm *credo ut intelligam*,—according to which reason was to confine itself to the analysis and demonstration of the data received in implicit faith from the Church, —prepared the way for the recognition that the two are not essentially at variance. The mind

that proceeds from *veneratio* to *delectatio*, from awe and submission to the doctrine to enjoyment and appreciation of it, must already in its awe and submission have the beginnings of an intelligent appreciation. Anselm's saying might be understood simply as meaning that we must have spiritual experience, ere we can understand the things of the spirit. And in this sense it was adopted by the Reformers to express an idea almost the opposite of that with which the Scholastics had associated it, —the idea that the direct apprehension of spiritual truth as entering into the inner life of the subject, as identified with his very consciousness of self, is the basis of all knowledge of it. In the Protestant church of the period after the Reformation, we find a growing tendency to insist on the subjectivity of religion, in the same exclusive and one-sided way in which the mediæval Church had insisted on its objectivity. In some extreme representatives of Protestantism this went so far as to lead to a disregard, almost to a rejection, of all objective doctrine, and a reduction of theology to an account of the religious consciousness. On the other hand, while religion was thus made subjective, science claimed to be purely objective.

and the followers of Bacon seemed to adopt towards nature the same attitude of passive receptivity which the mediæval Christian was taught to hold towards the Church. While man was to learn everything from himself in religion, he was to learn nothing from himself in science. His aim must be to exclude subjective *idola*, in other words, to accept the facts as they were given, and keep himself out of the way. The inevitable result of this difference of view as to the nature of knowledge in these two different regions was, however, on the one hand a withdrawal of religion from all connection with finite interests, and, especially from the attempt to connect religious principles with the knowledge of the finite world, and, on the other hand, an increasing tendency in those who represented finite science to regard religion as something merely subjective and even individual, as a feeling which could not be translated into thought or made the basis of any knowledge of the objective world.

The opposite principles of certitude, which were thus set up for religious truth and truth of science, need only to be brought together and contrasted to betray that they rest upon opposite abstractions,

neither of which expresses the complete nature of truth or knowledge. On the one hand the truths of religion were maintained just because they were not, or were not merely, *objective*, but were capable of being tested by inner experience, and identified with the self-consciousness of the individual. On the other hand the truths of science were maintained because they were not, or were not merely, *subjective*, but were capable of being verified in objective experience. It was rightly seen on the one side that mere subjective feelings or opinions have no validity for any one but the subject of them, and on the other side that what is merely objective or externally given can have permanent value and interest for the intelligence only as it ceases to be mere isolated and unrelated fact—nay, that, even when science has discovered law and order in nature, its results still want the highest value and interest so long as that law and order are not seen as standing in essential relation to the intelligence itself. The idea of truth or knowledge as that which is at once objective and subjective, as the unity of things with the mind that knows them, enables us to understand the condemnation which the

religious mind passed upon a merely external dogma, and even its lack of interest in a science which presented itself as an account of merely objective or external facts. And it enables us also to understand the way in which scientific men insisted upon objective fact as the basis of all knowledge, and the disrespect which they felt for a religion which seemed to admit that it had no such support. What is wanted to clear up the confusion on both sides is the growth of the perception among *scientific* men, that the objectivity which they are seeking cannot be mere objectivity (which would be unmeaning), but an objectivity that stands in essential relation to the intelligence, and, on the other hand, the growth of the perception among *religious* men, that the subjectivity of religion only means that God, who is the objective principle by whom things are and are known, is a spiritual Being, and can therefore be revealed to the spirit. When these two corrections have been made, it must become obvious that the religious consciousness is not the consciousness of another object than that which is present in finite experience and science, but simply a higher way of knowing the same object. And in this it is

also involved that the two ideas of *a priori* and *a posteriori*, of that which is evolved from within and that which is given from without, are not essentially opposed to each other, but that the *a posteriori* is simply the first form of a consciousness which in its ultimate development must become *a priori*.

In that philosophy of compromise which was initiated by Descartes, one part of knowledge was regarded as innate, or developed from within, and another part as empirical, or imparted from without. In the second period of the history of modern philosophy this compromise was broken, and the names of Locke and Leibniz—though with some hesitation on both sides—represent respectively the theory that all knowledge is *a posteriori* and the theory that all knowledge is *a priori*. The compromise seemed to be renewed with Kant, but the form in which it was renewed pointed, as has been already shown, to something more than a compromise; for his doctrine was that the *a posteriori* element, the facts, exist for us only under *a priori* conditions, or, in other words, that what is usually called *a posteriori* is in part *a priori*. The criticism of this view need not be repeated. It is sufficient

here to say that if, as Kant shows, the elements are inseparable or organically united, it is impossible to allege that so much belongs to the one and so much to the other. Furthermore, the consciousness of an essential difference in the elements of knowledge is possible, only so far as that difference is transcended by the unity of knowledge. We can distinguish the *a priori* from the *a posteriori* only on condition that we can transcend the distinction, and this means that the distinction itself is not absolute, but that there is a point of view from which the *a posteriori* may be regarded as *a priori*, and that which is given from without to the spirit may be referred to its own self-determined development.

Now it is just here that we come upon the great turning-point of philosophical controversy, in the form which it has taken in modern times. The problem may be expressed thus—In what sense can we apply the idea of development to the human spirit? Are we to treat that development as merely a determination from without, or as an evolution from within, or as partly the one and partly the other? In a sense all writers of the present day would admit that this last is the case.

For, on the one hand, even the Darwinian theory accounts for development by aid of what we may call the *a priori* tendency of the individual to maintain itself in the struggle for existence, though it supposes that the condition or medium in which the individual is placed determines the direction in which that development proceeds. And, on the other hand, no one now would adopt the Leibnizian theory that the individual is a monad, whose self-development is entirely conditioned by itself in such a sense that all the relations which it has to other existences are merely apparent, and that the coincidence of its life with the life of the world is the result of a pre-established harmony. On both sides, therefore, it would be admitted that in some sense the individual is determined by itself, though the tendency of the Darwinians would be to regard such self-determination as something merely formal; and on both sides it would also be admitted that self-determination does not exclude a determination from without, though extreme opponents of Darwin might be inclined to reduce this determination to a mere stimulus, or external condition, of the development of the nature of the subject to which the stimulus is applied.

The question, however, remains whether, after all, this opposition of without and within is an absolute one, or whether there is any point of view from which it may be transcended. To Aristotle it seemed possible to answer this question in the affirmative, because he conceived that the reason of man is a pure or universal δύναμις, the evolution of which to complete self-consciousness is one with the process whereby the objective world comes to be known. Yet, as Aristotle admitted the existence in the world of a material principle which was essentially different from the ideal principle of reason, he was obliged to limit his assertion of the possible unity of the subjective and the objective consciousness, and to say merely that "in things *without matter* the knower is identical with the known."[1] But this would immediately lead to the conclusion that the pure development of reason must be secured by abstraction from all finite and material objects, rather than by a thorough comprehension of them. The freedom of the spirit, on this theory, must be a negative and not a positive freedom, a freedom won, not by overcoming the world, but by withdrawing ourselves from its influence.

[1] *De Anima*, iii. 4.

It remained, therefore, for modern philosophy to work out the Aristotelian idea that the rational being as such, in spite of its necessary relation to and dependence on an external world, is never in an absolute sense externally determined. And, as we have already seen, the Kantian philosophy brought this problem within the reach of solution, in so far as it showed, first, that objective existence can have no meaning except existence for a thinking self, and, secondly, that existence for a thinking self means an existence the consciousness of which is "capable of being combined with the consciousness of self." Add to these propositions the doctrine which was maintained by Kant's successors, that *that* only can be combined with the consciousness of self which is essentially related to it, and we arrive at an idealistic theory of the world, which enables us at once to understand the relative value of the distinction between self-determination and determination from without, and at the same time to see that it is *only* relative. If it be true that nothing exists which is not a possible object of consciousness, and again that there is no possible object of consciousness which is not essentially related to the unity of the self, then the phenomena

of the external world, which at first present themselves under the aspect of contingent facts, must be capable of being ultimately recognised as the manifestation of reason; and the history of the conscious being in his relations with that world is not a struggle between two independent and unrelated forces, but the evolution by antagonism of one spiritual principle. It is, on this view, the same life, which within us is striving for development, and which without us conditions that development. And the reason why the two terms, the self and the not-self, thus appear to be independent of each other, or to be brought together only as they externally act or react upon each other, lies in this, that the object is imperfectly known, and the subject is imperfectly self-conscious. This, however, does not make it less true that in self-consciousness is to be found the principle in reference to which the whole process may be explained, and therefore that the self-conscious subject, as such, lives a life which belongs to him, not merely as one object among others, but as having in himself the principle from which the life and being of all proceeds.

From this point of view, as has been already

indicated, the relative value of a theory of human development, such as that which might be based on the ideas of Darwin, would not be denied. The conscious being may be regarded simply as an externally determined object, and the incorrectness of this assumption will not entirely destroy the value of the results attained, especially if, as is often the case with those who seek to construct a natural science of man, the assumption itself is not very strictly adhered to, but corrected by the tacit admission of other conceptions somewhat inconsistent with it. But, at the same time, it would require to be pointed out that such a science is necessarily abstract and imperfect, as it omits from its view the central fact in the life of the object of which it treats. It can do nothing to account for man's consciousness, or his capacity of becoming conscious, of the influences by which he is supposed to be determined; or, to put it from the other side, it takes for granted that the objects that influence man are intelligible objects, "capable of being combined with the consciousness of self," without seeing how much is involved in this assumption. Now it is evident that the consciousness of an influence cannot be explained by the influence

itself, nor even by that influence taken together with the nature of the sensitive beings subjected to it. It is evident also that an influence mediated by consciousness is not, strictly speaking, an external influence, but that it is already transformed, and in process of being further transformed, by the development of the self to which it is present. For the dawn of consciousness, in which the external object first comes into existence for us as opposed to the self, is at the same time the beginning of the process by which its externality is negated or overcome. Self-consciousness is that which makes us individuals in a sense in which individuality can be predicated of none but a self-conscious being. For, in determining himself as a self, the individual at the same time excludes from himself every other thing and being, and determines them as external objects. He emancipates himself from the world at the same time that he repels the world from himself. Yet this movement of thought, by which his individuality is constituted, is also that by which he is lifted above mere individuality, for, in becoming conscious of self and not-self in their opposition and relation, he ceases to be simply identified with the one to the exclusion of the other.

His finite individuality is regarded by him from a universal point of view, in which it has no less and no more importance than any other individuality, or in which its greater or less importance is determined only by its place in the whole. On this universality of consciousness rests the possibility of science and of morality. For all science is just a contemplation of the world *in ordine ad universum* and not *in ordine ad individuum;* and all morality is just action with a view to an interest which belongs to the agent, not as this individual, but as a member of a greater whole, and ultimately of the absolute whole in which all men and all things are included.

In this nature of the conscious subject lies also the possibility of metaphysic in the sense of Aristotle, as that science which goes *back* to a πρῶτον φύσει, a beginning which is prior to the existence in consciousness of the individual self, and *forward* to an end in which the divisions of the finite consciousness are transcended,—as including, in short, ontology, or metaphysic in the narrower sense, on the one side, and theology, or the philosophy of religion, on the other. In truth, these two extremes of science are necessarily bound together:

we cannot go back to the beginning, unless we can go on to the end; we can recover the first unity only if we can anticipate the last. Or, to free this thought from the associations of time, we cannot apprehend the unity which is involved or presupposed in all the differences of our conscious life, except in so far as we can look at our individual existence from the point of view of the whole to which it belongs.

This will become more evident, if we consider the nature of the limits which have to be transcended by such a science. The individual conscious subject, as he finds himself at first, is but one being in a world that stretches out, apparently without limits, on every side of him. Of the things by which he is immediately surrounded he sees but a small part, and the influences which he receives from them are, as he knows, like the wave that breaks upon a shore from an unknown ocean, only the last partial expression of impulses that come from regions beyond his ken. Again, he finds himself as one in a changing series of beings, of which he knows only the last preceding terms, and he is aware that in a few years he, as one of this series, will cease to be. He is

thus to himself a definitely limited being, and though his knowledge of himself and his world may be gradually widened so as to reach some little way back into the past, and anticipate a little of the future, or may go outwards in space to embrace a widening circle of existences around him, yet he always stops at a limit, of which he is conscious that it is no absolute limit, but simply an arbitrary halting-place where vision grows indistinct and imperfect. When he reflects upon himself from this point of view, he is forced to regard himself as but a fragment, and a fragment of an unknown whole, by which his whole being is determined to be what it is. His highest knowledge seems to be but a consciousness of his ignorance, his highest freedom a determination by motives the ultimate meaning of which is hid from him.

So far there seems to be no room for any metaphysical knowledge, any knowledge of ourselves and our world, which is other than relative and *in ordine ad individuum.* But further reflection shows that in this very consciousness of limit there is implied a consciousness of that which is beyond limit. While we proceed from

part to part, beginning with ourselves and our immediate surroundings, and following out lines of connection that lose themselves in the distance, we are guided by a consciousness of the whole as a unity through which the parts are determined. Nay, it is just the presence of this consciousness that makes us capable of what seems the piecework of our knowledge, in which, by the aid of the principle of causality, we connect particular with particular, and so gradually extend the sphere of light into the encompassing darkness. For that principle simply means that the limited external object does not sufficiently explain to us its own existence, and that therefore we are forced to explain it by a reference to something beyond it. It means, in other words, that we cannot rest in that which is not a self-bounded, self-determined whole. The application of the category of external determination has therefore an essential reference to the higher category of self-determination. The mere endlessness of space and time has no meaning except in opposition, yet in relation, to the true infinity, of which we find the type in self-conscious thought. Or, to put it in the Kantian form in which it is already

familiar to us, the consciousness of the objective world in space and time stands in relation to the unity of self-consciousness. And if, when we regard the former exclusively, we are forced to view ourselves as insignificant and short-sighted finite beings in an infinite universe, when we regard the latter we are enabled to see that what is revealed in all that universe is only that spiritual principle which we find also in ourselves. In this way a new light is thrown on our first consciousness of ignorance. The strivings of our reason after knowledge can no longer be regarded as strivings after an unknown goal, but rather after a goal which it has prescribed for itself. The narrow limits of our individual life are not removed, but they cease to be for us the limits of a narrow circle of definition within a formless infinite. They become the limits of a sphere within a sphere, a sphere which is defined by the idea of knowledge or self-consciousness itself, and in which therefore, however we may wander, we are everywhere at home. In religious language, the sphere is not a mere universe, but God, who is without us only as He is within us, so that "by the God within we can understand the God without."

Again, as this consciousness takes man beyond his immediate existence, and enables him to determine it in relation to an absolute unity of all things in God, so it enables him to go back to a unity which is behind or prior to that existence. For, if the individual can look at himself just as he looks at others, and at others as he looks at himself, *i.e.*, if he can regard the world from a point of view which is unaffected by his individuality, and in which that individuality is for him only what it is for impartial reason, he can have nothing in him which binds his consciousness to his individuality as mere individuality. As therefore he can go beyond himself to apprehend the whole in which his individuality has a place, so there is nothing to prevent him from going back upon himself, and upon the conditions which are prior to his own individual being. He is not tied to his immediate life, and can go below it just as he can rise above it.

"O God, I think Thy thoughts after Thee," said Kepler. In reading the "thoughts" written in the planetary system, Kepler was discovering the meaning of that which is simpler and more

elementary than the existence of man, as a cycle of mechanical relations is simpler and more elementary than self-consciousness. Yet it was a true feeling that led him to connect this descent into the mechanical world with God. For it is only in virtue of the same faculty which enables us to rise to the absolute life which includes and subordinates our own, that we can so free ourselves from the image of our own conscious life as to apprehend and comprehend the simpler relations of purely physical existence. But the same faculty of going back upon ourselves has a still deeper manifestation. Not only can we abstract from ourselves so as to understand the inorganic world, we can also abstract from ourselves so as to understand the conditions which are prior to the thought, and therefore to the existence, of any objective external world at all, the universal conditions of the knowable and therefore also of reality. In doing so, to use Hegel's metaphor, which is but an extension of Kepler's, we are "thinking what God thought and was before the creation of the world," *i.e.*, we are thinking the spiritual unity presupposed in all knowledge, and therefore in all objects of know-

ledge—the consciousness in relation to which everything is, and is known.

3. *The Relation of Metaphysic to Logic.*—The ordinary view of logic is based on two presuppositions which tend to separate it almost entirely from metaphysic: it is based on the presupposition of an opposition, or at least a merely external relation, between thought and its object, and again of an opposition, or merely external relation, between the form or method and the content or matter of thought. The intelligence is regarded as dealing with an object which is given to it externally, and which, therefore, it can truly represent, only if it leaves it unchanged and introduces into it nothing of its own. Truth, to use a well-known definition, is the agreement of our conceptions with their objects, and in bringing about this agreement all the concessions must be on the side of thought. Conformably to this view, the processes of thought must be purely analytic; *i.e.*, thought may break up the given idea of the object into its constituent elements, and again out of these elements it may recompose the idea in its unity, but it can add nothing and take nothing away. It is like an instrument which alternately dissects a solid mass

into smaller parts and again mechanically presses them together, but which never penetrates and dissolves the harder matter, still less fuses it into a new form, by bringing it into contact with new chemical elements.

This conception, like much of the philosophy of which it is a specimen, is a kind of exaggerated caricature of one aspect of the philosophy of Aristotle. Aristotle is the great analytic philosopher. He first laid down boundaries in that continuous domain of science which Plato had first surveyed. Not that he ever completely lost sight of the unity or continuity of the different sciences which he thus distinguished. His unrivalled genius is shown nowhere more clearly than in those not unfrequent utterances, weighty with speculative insight into the unity of things, in which, at a stroke, he makes his own landmarks and all landmarks to disappear. Yet such utterances generally stand by themselves, and do not alter the general analytic spirit of his philosophy. They are not so developed as to show distinctly the merely relative character of the divisions and distinctions which he elsewhere sets up, or the limits of the sphere within which they

hold good. Hence it was easy for minds, which possessed something of Aristotle's keenness of understanding without his speculative depth, to neglect such expressions, or to explain them away. And this process of degradation was the more rapid, as the philosophy of Aristotle soon ceased to be studied in his own writings, and became a traditionary possession of the schools. In this way we may partly explain how logic came to be regarded by mediæval philosophy as a mere form of thought, which could be altogether separated from the matter, and by the application of which that matter could be in no way affected or changed. But for such a view, indeed, it is difficult to conceive how the schoolmen could have ventured to apply any logical processes at all to the sacred matter of dogma. The idea of externally adding anything to the faith once delivered to the saints was excluded by the principle of authority; and the idea of developing out of that faith anything that was not immediately contained in it had not yet presented itself to any one. Hence the business of thought seemed to be purely formal and analytic, and it was only on the plea of its being such, that its activity could be tolerated at all.

Nor was this view of logic at once changed by the revolt against scholasticism. The first philosophical exponents of the modern scientific movement, while they rejected the matter of dogma as fictitious, or at least as transcending the sphere of positive knowledge, and while they substituted in its place, as the object of investigation, the facts of experience, did not realise any more than the schoolmen that the form or method of knowledge could be other than analytic of given matter. Bacon, their protagonist, was above all solicitous to guard against any subjective *anticipatio naturæ;* nor did he see that the questions which, in his theory of "forms," he proposed that science should ask of nature, themselves involved any preconceived theory regarding it. Conscious, as every true scientific mind must be, that the study of nature involves a constant self-abnegation, a patient self-distrustful course of experiment and observation, he and his followers did not realise the presuppositions that make the inquiry possible, and by which it must be guided. Still less did they recognise that the separation between the mind and its object, which they took for granted, can only be a relative division, *i.e.*, a division on the

basis of a unity, and that therefore the self-abnegation of the mind in its investigation of facts cannot be an absolute self-abnegation, but is only the first step on the way to the discovery that the facts are intelligible, and so essentially related to the intelligence. Hence to them logic still seemed an analytic process, the end and aim of which was understood to be that a world, existing in itself *out of* relation to thought, should be reproduced in a more or less imperfect image *in* thought. And, when it came to be suspected by a less naive philosophy of experience that, after all, certain presuppositions, not given in experience itself, were involved in the scientific interpretation of it, various expedients were devised to reduce these presuppositions in an indirect way to empirical truths,—expedients of which Mill's attempt to base the law of causality upon an *inductio per enumerationem simplicem* may be taken as the type.

When we go back to Aristotle,—who was the "founder of logic" in the sense that he was the first who treated logical method as a separate branch of science,—we find that his division of logic from metaphysic is by no means so definite and

complete as it was made by some of his successors. The vindication of the highest principle of thought, the law of contradiction, is treated by him as the business of metaphysic. And, though he separates the idea of truth from the idea of reality, and regards the former as involving a relation of thought to a reality which is determined in itself independent of thought, yet he does not regard this independence as by any means absolute. Truth is defined by him as a connection or distinction of ideas which *corresponds* to a union or separation of things, but does not necessarily so correspond. This definition, however, holds good only in so far as things not essentially related are brought together *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*. Where necessity comes in, and is apprehended by reason, the case is different. For in that case we have not merely an external synthesis, but an essential identity, *i.e.*, a unity of elements which can neither be, nor be known, apart from each other. In relation to the principles of science, therefore, Aristotle holds that error, *i.e.*, a connection of ideas not corresponding to a connection of things, is impossible, and that the only alternatives are knowledge and ignorance. Either we possess the

idea or we do not possess it; as Aristotle otherwise expresses it, in thought we are either in contact with the things or not in contact with them; there is no third possibility. The meaning of Aristotle becomes clearer when we remember that, according to his view, the intelligence, in apprehending the indivisible unity of elements in the object, is at the same time apprehending the unity of the object with itself. The mind cannot be deceived in regard to that which forms a part of its consciousness of itself. In freeing the essential conception of the object from the contingency of matter, science has freed the object from that which made it foreign to the intelligence, and the relation of thought to things ceases to be one of correspondence, and becomes one of identity.

The legitimate inference from this view of the relation of the intelligence to the intelligible world would seem to be, that the partial separation of thought from its object, and its imperfect correspondence with it, are characteristic of our first empirical consciousness of things, and of the stage in which we are advancing from that consciousness to science, but that in completed science the

division ceases. The *esse* of things is not their *percipi*, but their *intelligi*. But, if this be taken as the truth, then it can no longer be supposed that the process by which scientific knowledge is attained, consists simply in an analysis of the object as it is given in immediate perception. On the contrary, it must be held that, if our thought has to submit itself to the object, and if it has to be brought into conformity with the object by a process of induction, it is equally true that in this process the object also must be changed, that it may be brought into conformity with the principle of thought. The genesis of science, according to this view, is not merely an analysis of given facts, but a process of vital transformation, by which consciousness on the one side and the object on the other are brought into unity with each other. The idea, indeed, of an empty process, a process in which the activity of the mind is merely formal, is one which will not stand the slightest examination. A mind without categories, if such a thing were conceivable, would have no questions to ask in relation to the object presented to it, and could therefore get no answers. Those who make a pretence of approaching an object in an absolutely

receptive attitude, and without any presuppositions, only show that they are unconscious of the categories by which their thought is ruled; and they will be most slavishly guided by these categories just because they are unconscious of them. The schoolmen, indeed, when they applied their logical principles to the matter of Christian dogma, did not recognise that they were doing more than analysing and bringing out clearly the meaning of that dogma. But the effect of their work was to turn the whole system of theology into a collection of insoluble puzzles; for the doctrine they had to analyse was a doctrine of reconciliation between divine and human, infinite and finite, universal and particular, and the principle of their method was to treat all these oppositions as absolute. In like manner it might be shown that the analysis of social phenomena which was made in the last century, was inadequate and superficial, just because of the latent assumption of individualism on which it proceeded, and that the greater success of writers like Comte and Spencer does not arise, merely or mainly, from their being more careful observers of the phenomena of social life, but in great part from the fact that, rather by the

unconscious movement of opinion than by any distinct metaphysic, their minds have become possessed by more adequate categories.

The idea that the process of thought is merely formal, or analytic of given matter, is, however, an error that has a truth underlying it. This is the truth expressed by Aristotle in his much misunderstood comparison of the intelligence of man to a *tabula rasa*, upon which nothing at first is written, and again in his assertion—already quoted—that the mind is a pure δύναμις, without any distinguishing quality of its own which could prevent it from apprehending the real nature of other things. For the meaning of these statements is that self-conscious reason is not a special thing in the world, but the principle through which all things are, and are understood; and that, therefore, prior to experience, the undeveloped reason of man is undetermined and indifferent, and open to be determined in one way or another, according to the object to which it is directed. Hence the conscious subject, as such, is not bound to his own individuality, but can regard things, nay, in a sense, must regard them, from a point of view which is independent of it. This is what makes possible

the self-restraint and self-abnegation prescribed to the scientific man, whose whole duty, as it is often said, is to keep himself out of the way and let the objects speak, to lay aside all subjective *idola* and prejudices that stand between him and the reality of things. This at first sight may seem to be equivalent to the assertion that the mind ought to be in a state of simple passivity or receptivity towards objects. What is really meant, however, is not that the intelligence should go out of itself, or cease to be itself, that it may know its object, but simply that it should show itself in its universality, or freedom from the limits of the individual nature. The self-abnegation of science is an endeavour, so to speak, to see the object with its own eyes, but this it can do only in so far as the consciousness, for which the object is, is that consciousness in relation to which alone all objects are, and are understood. Or, to put this in another form, the conscious self in its scientific self-abnegation does not give itself up to another, and become purely passive; it only gives up all activity which is not the activity of that universal thought, for which and through which all things are. Hence, when it has so abnegated itself, its most intense

constructive activity is just beginning, though, just so far as the self-abnegation has been real, that constructive activity has become one with the self-revelation of the object. As, however, it is only through the constructive activity of thought that there exists for us any object at all, so it is only through its continued activity that the conception of the object is changed, till it is completely revealed and known. And this activity involves a continuous synthesis, by which an ever wider range of facts is brought together in an ever more definite unity, until the mind has, if we may use the expression, exhausted its store of categories upon the world, and until the world has completely revealed itself in its unity with itself and with the mind.

To combine these two ideas—on the one hand that science begins in a self-abnegation by which the mind renounces all subjective prejudices and thereby attains a purely objective attitude, and on the other hand that this purely objective attitude is not a mere attitude of reception, but one in which the mind is continually transforming the object by its own categories,—to see that the universality of the mind in knowing is not mere

emptiness, and that its activity is synthetic just when it is most free from all pre-suppositions extraneous to the nature of its object,—is one of the greatest difficulties of the student of metaphysic. Universality at first looks so *like* emptiness, and a universal activity so *like* a merely formal activity, that it is no wonder that the one should be mistaken for the other. But if we make such a confusion, we may soon be forced to choose between a sensationalism that makes knowledge impossible and a mysticism that makes it empty. For this the pure identity of thought with itself, which is involved in the process of analysis, is put on the one side, and the manifold matter of experience, which is the object of thought, on the other, and between these opposites no mediation is possible. If we take our stand upon the latter, we are forced to reject all mental synthesis as invalid, because it involves a subjective addition to the facts; if we take our stand on the former, we are compelled to regard all objective experience as irrational, because it does not correspond to the pure identity of thought.

In Aristotle's view of logic it cannot be said that this difficulty is clearly solved, though he seems

to have seen the error of both extremes. On the one hand, he often recognises the synthetic character of the process of induction, as when he speaks of the universal idea or law as a central principle, in which we must find the key to all the difficulties suggested by different aspects of a given subject. Yet in other places we trace the influence of a merely analytic conception of that process, as a process in which the universal is to be reached by abstracting from the peculiarities of individuals. And this conception of it is favoured by Aristotle's metaphysical theory, according to which the forms of things in the finite world are manifested in a resisting matter, a matter which prevents them from being perfectly or universally realised. For, in so far as this is the case, the facts will not be entirely explained by the knowledge of the form, and the knowledge of the form must be obtained, not by combining all the facts, but rather by abstracting from them. Again, in Aristotle's account of the process of thought in the *Prior Analytics*, he regards it as a formal deductive process; and, though in the *Posterior Analytics* he attempts to give a synthetic meaning to the syllogism,—by treating it as the process in

which the properties of a thing may be proved of it, or combined with it, through its essential definition,—yet this adventitious meaning bestowed upon the syllogistic process does not alter its essential nature.

Now the ultimate source of this inadequate view of the process of thought seems to lie in Aristotle's imperfect conception of the unity or identity which is for him the type of knowledge. For though, both in the *Metaphysic* and the *De Anima*, he defines that identity as a self-consciousness or as a consciousness of objects which is identical with self-consciousness, yet he does not seem clearly to distinguish between a unity in which there is no difference, and a unity in which difference is transcended and reconciled. This seems to be shown by his description of the principles which reason apprehends as *individua* or indivisible unities, rather than unities which imply, while they transcend, difference. Yet, in the definition of the unity of knowledge as self-consciousness, Aristotle has implicitly admitted that there is a duality or difference in the unity itself, and this might have been expected to modify his conception of the relation of consciousness to its

objects. For, as self-consciousness is not simple like a chemical element, but only in the sense that it is an indissoluble unity of opposites, it might have been anticipated that one, who had realised self-consciousness as the principle of knowledge, would be able to regard the opposition between the consciousness of self and the consciousness of the world as itself also capable of being conceived as a unity.

This misconception of Aristotle may be shown in another way. In the *Metaphysic* we find him laying down what is called the logical law of contradiction as the ultimate principle of knowledge. The meaning of this principle, however, as Aristotle states it, is simply that thought in its essence is definition or distinction. If, as Heraclitus says, everything at once is and is not, if we cannot attach any definite predicates to things by which they may be distinguished from each other, then, Aristotle argues, thought is chaos, and knowledge is impossible. If determination be not negation, if the assertion of A be not the negation of not-A, then there is no meaning in words. The criticism to be made on this view is obviously, not that it is a false statement of the law of thought, but

that it is an imperfect statement of it. Thought is undoubtedly *distinction;* and, if all distinction be confounded, no meaning can be apprehended or expressed. But thought is also *relation*; or, in other words, it connects together the things which it distinguishes: and this aspect of it is equally important with the other. Aristotle shows his one-sidedness — a one-sidedness which throws him into opposition to Plato, but which enables him to correct Plato only by falling into the opposite error—when he exclusively fixes his attention on the "differentiating" aspect of knowledge, and takes no notice of the "integrating" aspect of it. It is easy to see that this exclusive attention to one side of the truth may lead in many ways to a distorted view, both of the world and of the intelligence that apprehends it. If Heraclitus be interpreted as simply denying the right of thought to introduce its definiteness into the flux of sense, nothing but absolute scepticism can come out of his philosophy; and Aristotle was right in maintaining that it is only as the flux is brought to a stand, and the universal is fixed as a permanent and definite object of thought,[1]

[1] ἠρεμήσαντος τοῦ καθόλου ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, *An. Post.* ii. 19.

that knowledge becomes possible. But, on the other hand, if distinction be taken as absolute, if the definite assertion of a thing be taken as a negation of all relation to what it is not, if the fixity of thought be treated as an abstract self-identity, which excludes all the movement of finite things,—wherein they show their finitude and pass beyond themselves into other things,—then knowledge will be equally impossible. Our consciousness, on such a theory, would be disintegrated into parts, which would own no connection with each other; nor would it be possible for us to think of things as, in spite of their differences, bound together into the unity of one world. The law of contradiction or distinction, therefore, is likely to lead to serious misconceptions, unless it be complemented by a *law of relation*—a law expressing the truth that there is a unity which transcends all distinction. For all intelligible distinction—all distinction of things in the intelligible world—must be subordinate to their unity, as belonging to that world, and therefore essentially connected with each other and with the intelligence. In such a world, in other words, there can be no *absolute* distinctions or differences

(not even between being and not-being); for distinction without relation is impossible, and a conception held in absolute isolation from all correlated conceptions ceases to have any meaning. This does not, of course, imply a negation of the law of contradiction within its own sphere, but it does imply that that sphere is limited, and that there is no absolute contradiction. All opposition is within a pre-supposed unity, and therefore points to a higher reconciliation, a reconciliation which is reached when we show that the opposition is one of correlative elements.

The great step in logical theory which was taken by the idealistic philosophy of the post-Kantian period, was simply to dissipate the confusion which had prevailed so long between that bare or formal identity, which is but the beginning of thought and knowledge, and that concrete unity of differences, which is its highest idea and end. It was, in other words, to correct and complete the two imperfect conceptions of thought, as analytical, and as externally synthetical, by the conception of it as self-determining, to show that it is a unity which manifests itself in difference and opposition, yet through all the antagonism into

which it enters, is really developing and revealing its unity with itself. This new movement of thought might, in one point of view, be described as the addition of a third logic to the logic of analysis and the logic of inductive synthesis, which were already in existence. But it was really more than this; for the new logic was not merely an external addition to the old logics, but it also put a new meaning into these logics, by bringing to light the principles that were involved in them. At the same time it broke down the division that had been supposed to exist between logic and metaphysic, between the form or method of thought and its matter. It showed that thought itself contains a matter from which it cannot be separated, and that it is only by reason of this matter that it is able to ask intelligent questions of nature, and to get from nature intelligible answers. A short space must be devoted to explain this relation of the three logics to each other.

The *analytic logic* fairly represents our first scientific attitude to the world, in which we concentrate our attention upon the facts as they are given in experience, with no thought of any mental

synthesis through which they are given. To ourselves, in this stage of consciousness, we seem to have to do with an object which is altogether independent of our thought, and what we need in order to know it, is only to keep ourselves in a purely receptive attitude. All we can do is to analyse what is given, without adding to it anything of our own. It has, however, already been pointed out that this apparent self-abnegation is possible only because, in abnegating our individual point of view, we do not abnegate the point of view which belongs to us as universal or thinking subjects. In other words, the objectivity of knowledge thus attained is not the ceasing of the activity of our thought, but rather of all that interferes with that activity. We seem to abstract from ourselves, but what we do abstract from is only the individuality that stands between us and the world. The scientific observer who has thus denied himself, however, is not necessarily conscious of the meaning of what he has done. The immediate expression of his consciousness is not "I think the object," but "it, the object, *is*"; and the more intensely active he is, the more his activity is lost for him in the object of it. His

whole work is, for himself, only the analysis of given facts, and beyond that he seems to have nothing to do but to take the world as he finds it. The voice of nature to which he listens, is for him not his own voice but the voice of a stranger ; nor does it occur to him to reflect that nature could not speak to any one but a conscious self. His business is to determine things as they present themselves, to enumerate their qualities, to measure their quantities; and his logic therefore is a logic governed by the idea of the relative comprehension and extension of the things which he thus names and classifies. Such an analytic logic seems to be all that is necessary, because the only predicates by which things are as yet determined are those which are involved in their presence to us in perception, and as perceived they seem to be at once given in all their reality to the mind that apprehends them.

A step is taken beyond this first naive consciousness of things, whenever a distinction is made between appearance and reality, or whenever it is seen that the things perceived are essentially related to each other, and that therefore they cannot be known by their immediate presence to

sense, but only by a mind which relates that which *is*, to that which *is not*, immediately perceived. If "the shows of things are least themselves," we must go beyond the shows in order to know them; we must seek out the permanent for that which is given as transient, the law for the phenomenon, the cause for the effect. The process of thought in knowledge therefore is no longer lost in its immediate object, but is, partly at least, distinguished from it. For, just in proportion as the reality is separated from the appearance, does the knower become conscious of an activity of his own thought in determining things. From this point of view nature is no longer an object which spontaneously reveals itself to us, but rather one which hides its meaning from us and out of which we must wring its secret by persistent questioning. And, as this questioning process obviously has not its direction determined purely by the object itself, it becomes manifest that the mind must bring with it the categories by which it seeks to make nature intelligible. To ask for the causes of things, or the laws of things, presupposes that their immediate appearance does not correspond to an idea of reality which

the mind brings with it, and by which it judges that appearance. Nature is supposed to be given to or perceived by us as a multitude of objects in space passing through successive changes in time; and what science seeks is to discover a necessity of connection running through all this apparently contingent coexistence and succession, and binding it into a system. Science, therefore, seems to question nature by means of an idea of the necessary interdependence and connection of all things, as parts of one systematic whole governed by general laws—an idea which it does not get from nature, but which it brings to nature. Hence the logic in which this process of investigation expresses its consciousness of itself will be a *synthetic logic*, a logic built on certain principles which are conceived to be independent of experience, and by the aid of which we may so transform that experience, so penetrate into it or get beyond it, as to find for it a better explanation than that which it immediately gives of itself. The *Posterior Analytic*, in which Aristotle brings in the idea of cause to vivify the syllogistic process, or supply a real meaning to it, may already be regarded as a first

essay in this direction. And the theory of inductive logic, as explained by Bacon, Mill, and their successors, is a continuous attempt to determine what are the principles and methods on which experience must be questioned, in order to extract from it a knowledge which is not given in immediate perception.

It was, however, Hume who first brought into a clear light the subjectivity of the principles postulated in this logic, and especially of the principle of causality, which is the most important of them. In thus contrasting the subjectivity of the principles of science with the objectivity of the facts to which they are applied, it was his intention to cast doubt on science in so far as it is based on the application of the former to the latter. The principles, he maintained, are not legitimately derived from the facts, therefore they cannot legitimately be used to interpret them. They are due to the influence of habit, which by an illegitimate process raises frequency of occurrence into the universality and necessity of law, and so changes a mere subjective association of ideas into an assured belief and expectation of objective facts. The answer given by Kant to this sceptical criticism

of science involved a rejection of that very opposition of subjective and objective upon which it was based. For he mentions that without necessary and universal principles, the experience of things as qualitatively and quantitatively determined objects, coexisting in space and passing through changes in time (or even the determination of the successive states of the subject as successive), would itself have been impossible. Hence necessity of thought cannot be derived from a frequent experience of such objects. It is true that the determination of things as permanent substances, reciprocally acting on each other according to universal laws, goes beyond the determination of them as qualified and quantified phenomena in space and time. But both determinations are possible only through the same *a priori* principle, and we cannot admit the former determination without implicitly admitting the latter. As, therefore, it is through the necessity and universality of thought that objects exist for us, even before the application to them of the principles of scientific induction, and as the application of those principles is only a further step in that *a priori* synthesis which is already involved in

the perception of these objects, we have no reason for treating the former kind of synthesis as objectively valid, which does not equally apply to the latter.

This vindication of the principles of induction has, however, a further consequence, which was not clearly seen by Kant. It is fatal to the antithesis of the "given" and the "known," of what is perceived and what is conceived, of *natura materialiter spectata* and *natura formaliter spectata*, which he still admitted. For that antithesis really rested on the idea that there is no universal and necessary principle of determination of things involved in the apprehension of them as qualified and quantified phenomena in space and time. So soon, therefore, as it is seen that there is such a principle, and that the first determination of things as objects of perception is due to the same *a priori* synthesis which in the second place determines them as objects of experience, the ground for that contrast between reality and appearance, on which the theory of induction rested, is taken away. Kant, indeed, finds a new meaning for that contrast by interpreting it as referring, not to the opposition between things as they are

given and things as they are known, but to a supposed opposition between things as they are given and known in experience and things as they are in themselves out of experience. This new antithesis of reality and experience, however, only means that the former antithesis has broken down, and that therefore the ideal of knowledge based upon it has yielded to a new ideal. The so-called things in themselves are noumena, the objects of an intuitive or perceptive understanding, *i.e.*, objects in which the contrast of perception and conception, of given and known, is transcended. We can make Kant's theory consistent only by supposing him to mean that the conception of the world as a system of substances determining each other according to universal laws, does not yet satisfy the idea of knowledge which reason brings with it. In other words, just as science, guided by the idea of law or causal connection, found something wanting in the conception of the world as a mere complex of quantified and qualified phenomena in space and time, so philosophy, in view of a still higher ideal of knowledge, may condemn the conception of the world as a system of objects determined by necessary laws of relation,

as itself inadequate and imperfect. And we have seen that this higher ideal is that which is involved in the unity of self-consciousness. Unfortunately Kant was unable, as Aristotle had been unable, to distinguish this idea from the idea of an abstract identity in which there is no room for even a relative difference of perception and conception, and therefore the thought of a "perceptive understanding" occurs to him only to be rejected.

If, however, we correct this inadequacy of Kant's statement, as his later works enable us partly to correct it, we see that it involves a new idea of knowledge and a new logic,—a logic governed by the idea of organic unity and development, just as the analytic logic had been governed by the idea of identity, and as the inductive logic had been governed by the idea of necessary law. For, if the unity of self-consciousness be our type of knowledge, truth must mean to us, not the apprehension of objects as self-identical things, distinguished from each other in quantity and quality, nor even the determination of such things as standing in necessary relations to each other. It must mean the determination of the world (and of whatever in the world is in any sense an inde-

pendent reality, so far as it is so independent) as a unity which realises itself in and through difference, a unity which is indeed determined, but determined by itself. In a view of the world which is governed by this category, correlation must be reinterpreted as organic unity, and causation as development. Its logical method must be neither analytical nor synthetical, or rather it must be both at once, *i.e.*, it must endeavour to exhibit the process of things as the evolution of a unity which is at once self-differentiating and self-integrating, which manifests itself in difference, that through difference it may return upon itself. Further, as this logic arises simply out of a deeper consciousness of that which was contained in the two previous logics, so it first enables us to explain them. In other words, the advance from the analytic to the inductive logic, and again from the inductive to what may be called the genetic logic, may itself be shown to be a self-determined development of thought, in which the first two steps are the imperfect manifestation of a principle fully revealed only in the last step. The consciousness of self-identical objects, independent of each other and of thought, is thus only the beginning of a process

of knowledge, which reaches its second stage in the determination of these objects as essentially related to each other, and which finds its ultimate end in the knowledge of the correlated objects as essentially related to the mind that knows them. Or if, in this last point of view, things are still conceived as having a certain relative independence of the mind, it can only be in so far as they are in the Leibnizian sense monads, or microcosms,—*i.e.*, in so far as they are self-determined, and so have, in the narrower circle of their individual life, something analogous to the self-completed nature of the world, when it is contemplated in its unity with its spiritual principle.

Such a genetic logic is inconsistent with any absolute distinction between the *a priori* and *a posteriori* element in knowledge. For here the *a priori* is not simply a law of necessary connection to be applied to an external matter, but a principle of organic development, a principle which, from the very nature of it, cannot be applied to a foreign matter. To treat the world as organic is to apply to it a category which is inconsistent with its being something merely given or externally presented to thought. The relation of things to

thought must itself be brought under the same category of organic unity which is applied to the relation of things to each other in the world, otherwise the externality of the world to the thought for which it is, will contradict the conception of the world as itself organic. Hence the distinction of *a priori* and *a posteriori*, so far as it is maintained at all, must shrink to something secondary and relative. It can be maintained only as a distinction of thought from its object, which presupposes their ultimate unity. From this point of view logic may be said to deal with the *a priori*, in so far as it treats the general conditions and methods of knowledge without reference to any particular object. Logic must exhibit abstractly the process by which the intelligence establishes its unity with the intelligible world; or, to put it in another way, it must demonstrate that the being of things can be truly conceived only as their being for thought. It is limited to the *a priori*, in the sense that it ends with the idea that the *esse* of things is their *intelligi*, and does not consider how this real intelligence or intelligible reality manifests itself in the concrete world of nature and spirit.

In this sense logic cannot be separated from metaphysic, if metaphysic be confined to ontology. They are simply two aspects of one science, which we may regard either as determining the idea of being or the idea of knowing. The process of knowing is never really a formal process; it always involves the application of certain categories, and these categories are simply successive definitions of being or reality. We cannot separate the category from the movement of thought by which it is evolved and applied, nor the transition from lower to higher categories from changes of logical method. Hence a logic divorced from metaphysic inevitably becomes empty and unreal, and a metaphysic divorced from logic reduces itself to a kind of dictionary of abstract terms, which are put in no living relation to each other. For such a logic and such a metaphysic must rest on the assumption of an absolute division between being and thought, the very two terms the unity of which it must be the utmost object of both logic and metaphysic to prove and to produce.

4. *The Relation of Metaphysic to Philosophy of Religion.*—The possibility of a "first philosophy," as we have already seen, is essentially bound up

with the possibility of what we may call a "last philosophy." It is only in so far as we can rise above the point of view of the individual and the dualism of the ordinary consciousness,—in so far, in other words, as we can have at least an anticipative consciousness of that *last* unity, in which all the differences of things from each other and from the mind that knows them are explained and transcended,—that we are able to go back to that *first* unity which all these differences presuppose. The life of man begins with a divided consciousness, with a consciousness of self which is opposed to the consciousness of what is not-self, with a consciousness of a multiplicity of particulars which do not seem to be bound together by any one universal principle. Such division and apparent independence of what are really parts of one whole is characteristic of nature, and in spirit it is at first only so far transcended that it has become conscious of itself. A conscious difference, however, as it is a difference in consciousness, is no longer an unmediated difference. It is a difference through which the unity has begun to show itself, and which therefore that unity is on the way to subordinate. And all the development of

consciousness and self-consciousness is just the process through which this subordination is carried out, up to the point at which the difference is seen to be nothing but the manifestation of the unity. Just so far, therefore, as this end is present to us,—so far as we are able to look forward to the solution or reconciliation of all the divisions and oppositions of which we are conscious, and to see that there is an all-embracing unity which they cannot destroy,—is it possible that we should look back to the beginning or first unity, and recognise that these divisions and oppositions are but the manifestations of it. Thus the extremes of abstractness and of concreteness of thought are bound up together. The freedom of intelligence which enables us to free ourselves from the complexity of our actual life, and to direct our thoughts to the simplest and most elementary conditions of being and knowing, is possible only to those who are not limited to that life, but can regard it and all its finite concerns from the point of view of the infinite and the universal. In this sense it is true that religion and metaphysic spring from the same source, and that it is possible to vindicate the rationality of religion only on metaphysical prin-

ciples. The philosophy of religion is, in fact, only the last application or final expression of metaphysic; and, conversely, a metaphysic which is not capable of furnishing an explanation of religion, contradicts itself.

This last remark affords us a kind of criterion of a true metaphysic. Can it or can it not explain religion? If it cannot, it must be equally unable to explain its own possibility, and therefore implicitly it condemns itself. Thus a pantheistic system, which loses the subject in the Absolute, cannot explain how that subject should apprehend the substance of which it is but a transitory mode, nor, on the other hand, can it explain why the substance should manifest itself in and to a subject. And the same criticism may be made on all theories in which the first or metaphysical unity is abstractly opposed to the manifoldness and contingency of things. Not only of Spinoza, but also of Kant, of Fichte, and even of Schelling, it might with some truth be said that their absolute is like the lion's den in the fable; for all the footsteps are directed towards it, and none seem to issue from it. It is essential that the first unity should be such as to explain the

possibility of difference and division; for, if it is not, then the return to unity out of difference is made as accidental as the difference itself. Thus when Aristotle represented the Divine Being as pure self-consciousness, pure form without matter, he found himself unable to account for the existence of any world in which form was realised in matter. When therefore he speaks of the process of the finite world by which it returns to God, and attributes to nature a will, which is directed to the good as its final cause, his theory seems to be little more than a metaphor in which the analogy of consciousness is applied to the unconscious. For, if the Divine Being is not manifested in the world, any tendency of the world to realise the good becomes an inexplicable fact. A similar difficulty is, as we saw, involved in Kant's confusion of the bare identity of understanding with the absolute unity of knowledge. Reducing the unity of self-consciousness to such a bare identity, Kant could not be expected to see, what Aristotle had not seen, that pure self-consciousness is essentially related to anything but itself. Hence the various attempts which he made, in his ethical works and in his *Critique of Judgment*, to find a

link of connection between the noumenal and the empirical, were necessarily condemned even by himself as the expressions of a merely regulative or subjective principle of knowledge. Even Fichte, who found in the idea of self-consciousness a principle of differentiation and integration—which explained how self-consciousness in us should be necessarily correlative with the consciousness of a world—was, at least in his earlier and more important works, unable to free himself from the Kantian opposition of a noumenal identity which is without difference to a phenomenal unity which is realised in difference. Hence by him also the return out of difference is regarded as an impossibility, or as a *processus in infinitum*, and the absolute unity as that which is beyond all knowledge and only apprehended by faith.

If we look to completely elaborated theories, and disregard all tentative and imperfect sketches, it may fairly be said that all that has as yet been done in the region of pure metaphysic is summed up in two works, in the *Metaphysic* of Aristotle and the *Logic* of Hegel. And, up to a certain point, the lesson which they teach is one and the same, viz., that the ultimate unity which is

presupposed in all differences is the unity of thought with itself, the unity of self-consciousness, and that in this unity is contained the type of all science, and the form of all existence; in other words, that I = I is the formula of the universe. The difference between these two works has, however, already been indicated. With Aristotle, in so far as he neglects the essential relation of self-consciousness to consciousness, or of the conscious self to the world of objects in space and time, the unity of self-consciousness tends to pass, as it did pass with the Neo-Platonists, into a pure identity without difference. In the Hegelian logic, on the other hand, self-consciousness is interpreted as a unity which realises itself through difference and the reconciliation of difference,—as, in fact, an organic unity of elements, which exist only as they pass into each other. In other words, it is shown that the differentiating movement, by which the subjective and the objective self are opposed, and the integrating movement, by which they are reunited, are both essential. Hence we cannot think of the conscious self as a simple resting identity, but only as an active self-determining principle; nor can we think of its

self-determination as a pure affirmation of itself without any negation, but only as an affirmation which involves a double negation—an opposition of two elements which yet are essentially united. Each factor in this unity, in fact, is necessarily conceived as passing beyond itself into the other; the subject is subject, only as it relates itself to the object, the object is object, only as it relates itself to the subject. It is this tension against each other of elements which yet are correlated and indissolubly united, this self-surrender to each other of elements which yet are maintained in their distinction, that constitutes the organic unity of thought in itself, and separates it from the mere abstract unity of mysticism.

When, however, the concrete or self-differentiating character of the unity of self-consciousness is apprehended in this way,—so that it is impossible to confuse its indivisible unity with the simplicity of that which is one with itself merely because it has no differences in it,—the problem of the relation of pure self-consciousness to the world in space and time ceases to be insoluble. Thought, as it is seen to have difference in itself, is no longer irreconcilable with the world of difference; nor is it

necessary to introduce a foreign ὕλη to make their connection intelligible. For, as thought is a principle of difference as well as of unity, of analysis as well as of synthesis, and as it cannot realise itself in its unity except through the utmost development of difference, abstract self-consciousness, with its transparent or merely ideal difference, cannot be its ultimate form. On the contrary, the consciousness of self is possible only in distinction from, and in relation to, a world of objects. In other words, the unity of the thinking subject presupposes, not merely the opposition of the subjective and the objective self, but also the opposition of the self in its pure self-identity to a world of externality and difference. The pure intelligence, which is the *prius* of all things, must not, therefore, be regarded—as Aristotle regarded it—as merely theoretical, but also as practical. It must be conceived as a living principle, a principle which only in self-manifestation can be conscious of itself, and to the very nature of which, therefore, self-manifestation is essential. In this way Hegel—just because he grasped the concrete character of the unity of thought in itself—was enabled to under-

stand the necessary unity of thought or self-consciousness with the world, and to heal the division of physics from metaphysic, which Aristotle had left unexplained.

Schelling and others who have raised objections to the Hegelian method have specially directed their criticisms against this transition from logic to the philosophy of nature, from pure self-consciousness to the external world in space and time. In doing so, they have practically fallen back upon the Aristotelian theory, with its opposition of God, as pure form, to the finite world. But this in effect is to deny that "the real is the rational or intelligible," and to introduce into the world, as the ground of its distinction from reason, a purely irrational or contingent element. A modern disciple of Schelling's later positive philosophy [1] only draws the necessary consequence from this view, when he teaches the pessimist creed that the highest good is the negation or extinction of the finite. Nor can we wonder that the same writer, who denies that the absolute self-consciousness is essentially related to or manifested in the world, should proceed to reduce

[1] Von Hartmann.

this self-consciousness to a mystic identity, which comes out of itself and becomes self-conscious only by an inscrutable act of will. The fact, indeed, that those who deny the possibility of a rational transition from self-consciousness to the world, are forced by the logic of their position to reduce self-consciousness to an abstract identity, may be regarded as a kind of indirect proof that the principle of self-consciousness, truly conceived, does involve that transition.

Another step in the same direction may be made if we consider how the Cartesian philosophy treated the opposition between subject and object, which it also regarded as absolute. By Des Cartes mind and matter, thought and extension, are defined as abstract opposites, every quality of each finding its contradictory counterpart in a quality of the other. Mind is a pure self-determined unity, which is as it knows itself and knows itself as it is, which has no discretion of parts or capacity of division or determination from without. Matter is essentially discrete or infinitely divided; it is a pure passivity; and all its determination comes to it from without. The world is therefore, as it were, "cut in two with a hatchet," divided

into two unrelated existences, which are held together only by the will of God. Spinoza cuts the knot, and avoids the arbitrariness of this solution, by treating extension and thought as two attributes, separated in relation to our intelligence, but each expressing fully the absolute substance. And something like the same view has been revived in recent times, by writers like Lewes and Mr. Spencer, who speak of feelings and motions as two opposite "aspects" of the same fact. When we ask, however, *for whom* these attributes or aspects are a unity, it becomes clear that the intelligence, which is regarded as standing on one side of the dualism, must also be taken as transcending it, and relating the two sides to each other. Moreover, the correspondence of the two attributes upon which Spinoza insists, and their contrariety upon which Des Cartes insists, when taken together, give us the idea of a correlative opposition, *i.e.*, of an opposition of elements which yet are necessary to each other. If, therefore, they cannot be simply identified as Spinoza identifies them, yet they need no external bond such as Des Cartes introduces to combine them; for they cannot exist apart from each other.

Their opposition is held within the limits of their unity, and is no absolute contradiction, but rather an opposition which exists only as it is transcended. In other words, it is an abstract opposition, *i.e.*, it is an opposition of elements which seem to be irreconcilable, till it is observed that they are correlative, that each exists or has a meaning only as it relates itself to, or passes out of itself into, the other, and that each, held in its abstraction and separation from the other, loses all the meaning that it seemed to have. For, as in an organic body each member or organ lives only in tension against the others, yet only as continually relating itself to the others, so the utmost opposition of mind to matter, of the intelligence to the intelligible world, presupposes their unity, and is only the realisation of it.

There is here, however, something more than an ordinary case of correlation, for in this unity of opposites *mind* appears twice—once as one of the opposites, and again as the unity which transcends the opposition. This ambiguity becomes most obvious in theories like that of Mr. Spencer, who speaks of "two consciousnesses," which cannot be resolved into each other, but yet which strangely

form inseparable parts of one and the same consciousness. What, however, is really involved in such a statement is that the external world, which in the first instance presents itself as absolutely opposed to the subject whose object it is, is yet one with that subject, and that therefore the antagonism of mind to its object is only the last differentiation through which it realises its unity with itself. In Hegel's language, that which presents itself as other than mind is *its* other—"an other which is not another," whose difference and opposition to itself it overreaches and overcomes. We must, therefore, regard the independence and externality of nature, its indifference, and even, as it seems, opposition, to the development of the moral and intellectual life of man, as merely apparent. For man, in this point of view, is not merely one natural being among others, but *the* being in whom nature is at once completed and transcended. If, therefore, at first he appears to stand in merely accidental and external relations to the other existences among which he finds himself, yet the whole process of his life,—the process by which he comes to know the external world, and by which, reacting upon

it, he makes it the means to the realisation of an individual and social life of his own,—is the negation of this contingency and externality. In all this process he is showing himself to be a being who can know himself only as he knows the objective world, and who can realise himself only as he makes himself the agent of a divine purpose, to which all things are contributing.

Such an idea of man's relation to the world is necessarily involved in any theory that goes beyond that subjective idealism or sensationalism, which denies to him every object of knowledge except his own states of feeling, and every end of action except his own pleasures and pains. Recent speculation, indeed, has suggested a compromise by which this dilemma is supposed to be evaded, and mankind are represented as forming an organic unity in themselves, though they are still conceived as standing in an external and accidental relation to nature, the forces of which by their knowledge and skill they have subdued and are more and more subduing to their service. Such a compromise we find in the philosophy of Comte, the first writer who, starting from an apparently empirical basis, was able to break through the individualistic

prejudices of the school of Locke. In the latter volumes of his *Positive Philosophy*, still more in his *Positive Politics*, Comte so far transcends individualism as to deny the externality of men to each other, and to declare that "the individual, as such, is an abstraction," and that in reality he cannot be separated from the social organism, which is thus not merely an extraneous condition of his development, but essential to his very existence as man. Thus individual men exist only through the universal—through the spirit of the family, of the nation, of humanity, which manifests itself in them as a principle of life and development. Yet this organic unity, according to Comte, is in contact with a world, which in relation to it is external and contingent. Nature has not its final cause in man, but on the contrary is, at first, rather his enemy; and it is to humanity itself that the praise is due if to a certain extent the enemy has been turned into a servant. The unity of life which manifests itself in humanity cannot therefore be considered as a universal principle, as the principle of the whole universe, but simply as the principle of the limited existence of man, which is hemmed in on every side by external and, in the main,

unknown conditions. If humanity therefore is an organism, it is an organism existing in a medium which, in reference to it, is inorganic, *i.e.*, in a medium which has no essential relation to the life that animates man.

It is obvious, however, that this theory is an illogical attempt to find a standing ground between two opposite philosophies,—between the philosophy which treats man merely as a natural individual, placed among other individual beings and things, and which therefore regards his relation to them as something accidental and external and the philosophy which treats him as a spiritual subject, a conscious and self-conscious being, and regards him therefore as having no *merely* external relations either to other men or to nature. Comte shrinks from regarding the world without us as the manifestation of that spiritual principle which is also within us, which constitutes our very nature as individual men, and which therefore connects us with the world at the same time that it separates us from it. Yet he recognises the existence in us of a principle which is so far universal that it constitutes a community between all men. He thinks that the individual can transcend himself, so far

as to see all things, not indeed from a divine point of view, *sub specie æternitatis*, but from the point of view of universal humanity, and that in conformity with this theoretical consciousness, he can live a practical life of altruism, *i.e.*, a life in which he identifies his own good with the good of humanity. But the philosophy that has gone so far, must logically go further. It is impossible to treat humanity as an organism without extending the organic idea to the conditions under which the social life of humanity is developed. The medium by aid of which, or in reacting against which, the organised being maintains itself, is an essential part of its life; it remains organic, only in so far as it can mould itself to its conditions and its conditions to itself. This is true even of the animal organism in relation to the small circle of its environment, which, however, is part of a larger circle of conditions to which the animal has no relation. But a conscious being is a *universal* centre of relations; there is nothing which he, as conscious, cannot make part of his own life. Hence the application of the organic idea to him involves its application to the whole world. And, if the recognition of a universal principle manifested in human-

ity naturally led Comte to the idea of the worship of humanity, the recognition of a universal principle manifested in man and nature alike must lead to the idea of the worship of God.[1]

The rationality of religion, then, rests on the possibility of an ultimate synthesis, in which man and nature are regarded as the manifestation of one spiritual principle. For religion involves a faith that, in our efforts to realise the good of humanity, we are not merely straining after an ideal beyond us, which may or may not be realised, but are animated by a principle which, within us and without us, is necessarily realising itself, because it is the ultimate principle by which all things are, and are known. This absolute certitude of religion, that man can work effectually because all the universe is working with him, or, in other words, because God is working in him, can find its explanation and defence only in a philosophy for which "the real is the rational, and the rational is the real." And such a philosophy, beginning with the Kantian doctrine that existence means existence for a spiritual or thinking subject, must go on to

[1] This criticism of Comte is more fully developed in my book on *The Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte.*

prove that *that* only can exist for such a subject, which is the manifestation of thought or spirit; and conversely, that spirit or intelligence is essentially self-manifesting, or, in other words, that it cannot be conceived except as standing in essential relation to an external and material world. Finally, if nature be thus regarded as a necessary manifestation of spirit, it can be opposed to spirit only in so far as spirit in its realisation becomes opposed to itself. In other words, nature must be regarded as, from a higher point of view, included in spirit. Nature exists that it may show itself to be spiritual in and to man, who transcends it yet implies it, who finds in it the necessary basis of his thought and action, but only that he may build upon it a higher spiritual life.

> "Nature is made better by no mean
> But nature makes that mean: so over the art
> Which, you say, adds to nature is an art
> Which nature makes."

Only the order of precedence suggested by these words must be inverted. For, as nature is only *for* spirit, so the spiritual energy which reacts upon nature is that which manifests for the first time what nature in reality is. It is the con-

sciousness of this, *i.e.*, of the identity of that which is realising itself within and without us,—the consciousness that the necessity which is the precondition of our freedom is the manifestation of the very principle which makes us free—that turns morality into religion. For it is this alone which enables us to regard the realisation of the highest ends of human life neither as a happy accident, nor as a conquest to be won by the cunning of man from an unfriendly or indifferent destiny, but as the result towards which all things are working.

In this philosophy, which finds its most adequate expression in the works of Hegel, there are two things which may be distinguished—the general idealistic view of the world, and the dialectical movement of thought in which Hegel develops and expresses it. And there are perhaps many at the present time who are prepared to accept the former, but who yet suspect, or even reject, the latter. And no doubt there is much in Hegel's *Logic* and *Philosophy of Spirit*, and still more in his *Philosophy of Nature*, which there is reason to regard with distrust. In clever hands that are not checked by a sufficient consciousness of the whole, the

Hegelian dialectic may be made into the means of producing a seeming proof of anything. Nor is it always easy to determine how far Hegel himself was tempted, by an impatient consciousness of the universality of his method, to employ it in cases where the conditions of its successful application were wanting. Sometimes he seems to forget, what he himself teaches, that science must first have generalised experience and determined it by its finite categories, ere it is possible for philosophy to give its final interpretation. Yet, when we realise the nature of that interpretation, and of the transformation of science which philosophy by means of it proposes to effect, it becomes clear that the dialectic of Hegel is no extraneous addition to his idealism, but is part and parcel of the same movement of thought. For that dialectic rests on the idea that thought or self-consciousness finds in its own organic unity the ultimate key to all difficulties in regard to the objects of thought, as well as in regard to their relations to each other and to the mind. Self-consciousness, as has been already shown, is itself implicitly the whole web of categories, which it throws over the world, and by aid of which it makes the world intelligible. All these it

contains in itself; and, as it proceeds to determine the meaning of things, it simply produces its store, and exhausts itself on the object. Now, if it be essential to idealism, to make thought or self-consciousness the principle and ultimate explanation of all that exists, it is obvious that we cannot separate idealism from some such dialectic as this,—a dialectic which is nothing more than the mind's consciousness of its own movement or process of self-affirmation. If to find thought in things be more than an empty word, then the movement or process, which thought *is*, must explain at once the transition from thought to what in opposition we call "things," and must give us the means of reconciling that opposition. In other words, the same movement by which thought determines itself as self-conscious, *i.e.*, as a unity realised through difference, must also be conceived as the explanation of the difference *between* pure thought and the world, and as the solution of that difference in the idea of absolute spirit.

Such idealism has a close relation to Christianity; it may be even said to be but Christianity theorised. It has often been asserted that Hegel's philosophy

of religion is but an artificial accommodation to Christian doctrine of a philosophy which has no inherent relation to Christianity. If, however, we regard the actual development of Hegel's thought, it would be truer to say that it was the study of Christian ideas which first produced the Hegelian philosophy. What delivered Hegel from the mysticism in which the later philosophies of Fichte and Schelling tended to lose themselves, and led him, in his own language, to regard the absolute "not merely as substance but as subject,"—what made him recognise with Fichte that the absolute principle is spiritual, and yet enabled him with Schelling to see in nature, as the opposite of spirit, the very means of its realisation,—was his thorough appreciation of the ethical and religious meaning of Christianity. In the great Christian aphorism that "he who loseth his life alone can save it" he found a key to the difficulties of ethics, a reconciliation of hedonism and asceticism. For what this saying implies is that a spiritual or self-conscious being is one who is in contradiction with himself, when he makes his individual self his end. In opposing his own interest to that of others, he is preventing their interests from becoming his; all things are

his, and his only, who has died to himself. But if this be the truth of morality, it is something more, for "morality is the nature of things." We cannot separate the law of the life of man from the law of the world in which he lives. And, if it is the nature of things, as it is the nature of spirit, that he who loseth his life shall save it, the world must be referred to a spiritual principle, and the Christian doctrine of the nature of God is only the converse of the Christian law of ethics. To Hegel, starting from this point, a new light was thrown on the Fichtean treatment of the idea of self, and the Fichtean proof that the consciousness of self implies a relation to an object, an object which is opposed to the self, and which yet from another point of view—since an object exists only for a subject—cannot be anything but an element of its own life. It was seen that this movement of thought is no mere fluctuation between contradictory positions, to be terminated finally by an *ipse dixit* of faith, but that the unity of the opposite elements is apprehensible by the intelligence, and that indeed it is *its* presence to the intelligence which makes the consciousness of opposition possible. It was in this sense that

Hegel could say that that unity of opposites, which had been called unintelligible by previous writers, was just the very nature of the intelligence,[1] and that only a view of the world guided by this idea could be properly intelligible, while every other view must contain in it an unsolved contradiction, an element that remains permanently impervious to thought.

The great objection to a metaphysic like this, at least an objection which weighs much in the minds of many, is that which springs from the contrast between the claim of absolute knowledge, which it seems to involve, and the actual limitations which our intelligence encounters in every direction. If the theory were true—it is felt, or thought—we ought to be nearer the solution of the problems of our life, practical and speculative, than we are; the riddle of the painful earth ought to vex us less; we ought to be able to find our way more easily through the entanglement of facts, and to deal with practical difficulties in a less tentative manner. Yet there is really no antagonism between such a doctrine and a consciousness of the limitation of our faculties; nay rather, it is only on such a

[1] *Logik*, iii. p. 256, seq.

theory that a rational distrust of ourselves can be based. When Aristotle meets the warning that we should think finite and human things, since we are finite and human, with the answer that we ought rather, so far as in us lies, to rise to what is immortal and divine, he is not denying the limits of man's knowledge and power; on the contrary, he is rather pointing to the very principle which makes us conscious of those limits. For it is just because there is in man a principle of infinity that he knows his finitude, and, conversely, it is just in the *consciousness* of this finitude that he rises above it. A rational humility is possible only to one who has in himself the measure of his own weakness, and who, if he "trembles like a guilty thing surprised," is yet conscious that he is trembling before himself. This truth is often expressed by Kant with special relation to the moral consciousness, as where he contrasts the limitation of man, as a sensible being occupying an infinitesimal space in the boundless world of sense, with his freedom from all limitation as a personal self, a member of the truly infinite world of intelligence. But it is not necessary to adopt Kant's abstract division of the sensible from the intelligible

world, to see that our consciousness of the greatness of the problem to be solved in human life and thought, is deepened and widened by that very idea of philosophy, which yet gives us the assurance that the problem is not insoluble, and even that, in principle, it is already solved.

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